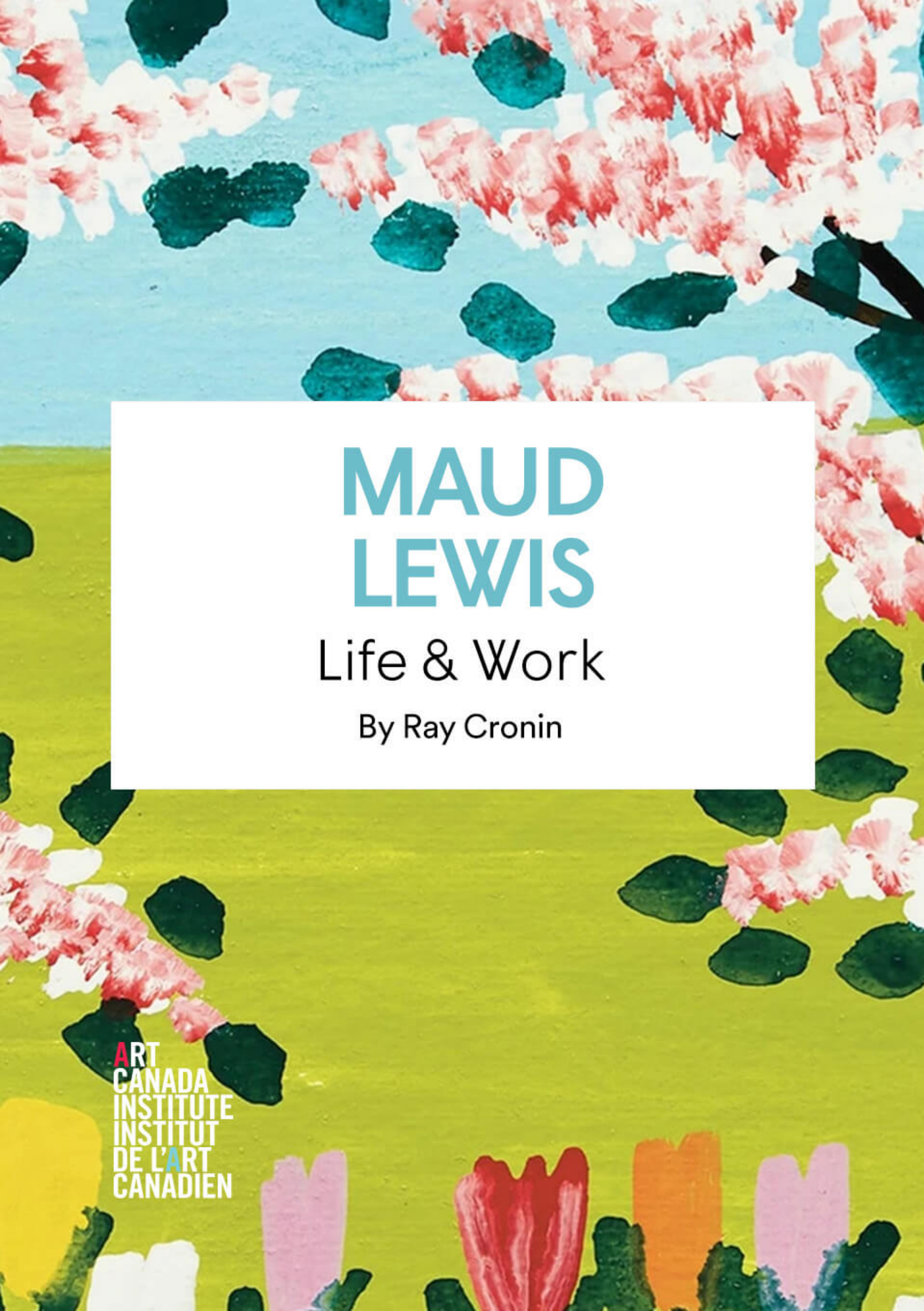

MAUD LEWIS

Life & Work

By Ray Cronin

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INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

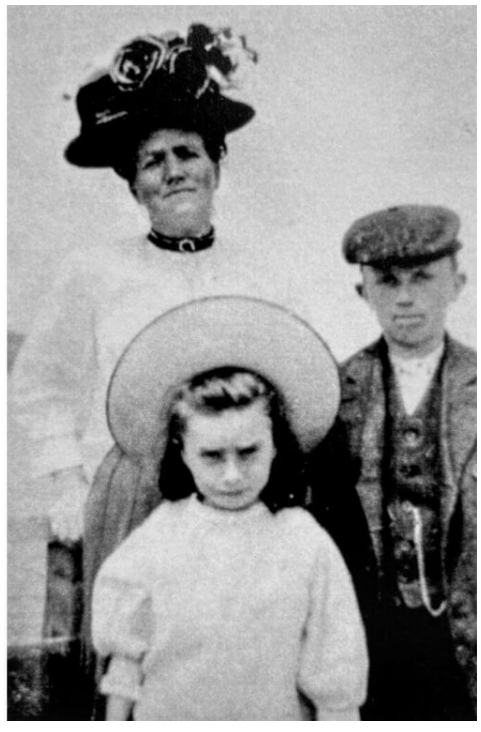
Contents

BIOGRAPHY

Maud Lewis (1901–1970) has become one of Canada's most renowned artists, the subject of numerous monographs, novels, plays, documentaries, and even a feature film. She was born into relative comfort and obscurity, and died in poverty, though enjoying national fame. She overcame severe physical challenges to create a unique artistic style, and sparked a boom in folk art in her home province. Though she rarely left her tiny house, her works have travelled around the world, and in the decades since her death she has become an iconic figure, a symbol of Nova Scotia, and a beloved character in the popular imagination.

EARLY LIFE

Maud Lewis's life was bounded by the distance between two of southwestern Nova Scotia's major towns—Digby and Yarmouth.[1] She was born in the hospital in Yarmouth on March 7, 1901, raised in the neighbouring small village of South Ohio, and lived most of her adult life closer to Digby, in the village of Marshalltown. The distance between the two towns is just over a hundred kilometres, stretching along the Bay of Fundy shore of one of Nova Scotia's remoter coasts.



LEFT: Maud Dowley with a cat named Fluffy, n.d., photographer unknown.
RIGHT: Maud Dowley with her brother, Charles Dowley, and mother, Agnes Mary Dowley, n.d., photographer unknown.

Today, Digby to Yarmouth is a short drive of about an hour, along a reasonably modern highway. In Lewis's childhood, of course, it was a different story, with few motorized vehicles and a dirt road that followed the shore, linking a chain of small fishing villages that dotted the coast. Most travel between the two towns, in that early part of the twentieth century, would have been undertaken by train or boat, then much more efficient modes of long-distance transportation. In 1965, for a CBC Television program, Lewis explained that the furthest she had been from her home was Nova Scotia's capital. "Halifax, that's the furthest I've been," she said. "And that's a long time ago, before I got married."[2]

Maud Lewis was born Maud Kathleen Dowley, and she was the only daughter of John Nelson Dowley and Agnes Mary German (also spelled Germain and Germaine). She had one older brother, Charles, who was born in 1897. Her mother subsequently gave birth to two more children, neither of whom survived more than a few days.

Lewis was born with congenital disorders that included acutely sloping shoulders, a curvature of her spine, and a severely recessed chin. She was small and frail, and there was little that her doctors could do for what remained an undiagnosed condition in her lifetime, short of treating the constant pain she must have endured. Over the years there have been attempts to diagnose her conditions, including suggestions that she suffered from polio or arthritis. The consensus now, based on photographs of her and on descriptions of how her condition worsened over the years, is that she was born with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. This condition is degenerative and can be extremely painful. It was little understood at the time.

Map of Nova Scotia.

Because of her physical challenges, Lewis was not an extremely active child, but nor was she a shut-in. She grew up, rather, in the sheltered milieu one might expect would surround the youngest child, and only daughter, of a family in small town Nova Scotia in those years. Lewis's mother encouraged her daughter's interest in the arts. She learned to play the piano and to draw and paint. These, along with sewing and decorative arts such as embroidery and crocheting, were considered suitable hobbies for young middle-class girls, and Lewis was no exception. She attended a one-room schoolhouse in South Ohio.

She was not raised in luxury by any means, but her childhood did not feature the cyclical, and always pressing, poverty of many of the surrounding farm and fishing families. Her father was a skilled craftsman—a blacksmith and harness maker, a subject that Lewis would later depict in paintings such as *Blacksmith's Shop*, 1960s. These trades carried significant weight in the community and enabled John Dowley to provide a comfortable living for his family.

Maud Lewis, *Blacksmith's Shop*, 1960s, oil on board, 34.2 x 42.7 cm, Collection of Dr. Doug and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia.

Lewis was born into a time of profound change for Nova Scotia and the world. The Victorian age was passing, and technology was encroaching on the rural lifestyle of Yarmouth and Digby Counties. The great shipyards of the age of sail that had once fuelled prosperity in towns and villages all along Nova Scotia's coast had been dying for decades, and even farming was changing, with horses and oxen giving way more and more to steam and then the internal combustion engine in the form of tractors and other heavy machinery. Automobiles were becoming more popular, and many people were being drawn off the land and the uncertain life of farming and lumbering, and into the cities and factories. It was, of course, the same story everywhere in the Western world, but the fact that the change was shared made it no less significant to Lewis and her family.

YEARS IN YARMOUTH

Maud Lewis was thirteen in 1914 when her family moved to Yarmouth from South Ohio and rented a house on Hawthorne Street. Her father set up a harness shop on Jenkins Street and from there developed a reasonably prosperous business that continued for over thirty years. Her brother, Charles, had already moved to Yarmouth, and he worked there as the manager of the Capitol Theatre. He was also a musician, a saxophone player in a dance band called the Gateway Four. Yarmouth was a bustling town in the 1910s and 1920s, with an active port for fishing, shipping, and passenger service to New York and Boston.

LEFT: Yarmouth Main Street, looking south, c.1887–92, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Postcard depicting the Evangeline Wharf in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, c.1910, published by H. Davis & Co, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, private collection.

Lewis completed the fifth grade at the age of fourteen. This was behind the norm, when a child of that age would have been expected to have reached Grade 6 or 7, but it is not known if she was held back by her health or by other considerations. Her biographer, Lance Woolaver, has suggested that her disabilities, which became more severe as she grew up, led to her leaving school early. In his view, "It seems likely that illness and her physical deformities played a role in this decision [to leave school]. Children made fun of her in the streets and mocked her flat chin."[3] Of course, in a time and place where many people received little formal education (Lewis's future husband, Everett Lewis, only completed the first grade), her progress, or lack thereof, may also indicate that school itself was not consistently offered.

Maud Lewis, *Greetings*, c.1945, oil on card paper, 7.6 x 12.7 cm (folded), Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

Not much is known of Lewis's life in Yarmouth, though a few photographs of her as a young woman do survive. She never had a job, and she lived at home with her parents. With her mother, however, she did turn her hand to a few commercial enterprises, including making Christmas cards and decorations and selling them door to door. In the early 1920s, a friend and local business woman, beauty salon owner Mae Rozee, began selling Lewis's cards and painted trays in her shop. While long remembered in Yarmouth, little of what she made from this period has been found to date. It is likely that the work she was selling in the early 1930s was drawn from popular imagery such as Christmas cards or other commercial illustrations.

While not much is known about Lewis's personal life before her marriage, one important fact was that she gave birth to a child, Catherine Dowley (later Muise), in 1928. Lewis never acknowledged Catherine as her child. Woolaver, whose research into this aspect of Lewis's life is detailed in his monumental book *Maud*

Lewis: The Heart on the Door (2016), was able to contact Muise's descendants. In an interview with journalist Elissa Barnard in 2017, Woolaver recounts that Lewis rebuffed Catherine Dowley: "The child went to Marshalltown to reunite. Maud said, 'My child was a boy born dead. I'm not your mother,' and at the time there were three grandchildren. Maud never accepted her child. She attempted to contact Maud again in a letter."[4] In the same interview with Barnard, Woolaver identifies the father, a man named Emery Allen, who abandoned Lewis when she became pregnant.[5]

In 1935 Lewis's father died. Her mother did not survive him long, dying in 1937. Lewis was left with nothing—what little estate there was went entirely to her brother, Charles. She briefly lived with Charles and his wife, Gert, but later in 1937 their marriage broke up, and Charles let the lease go on the family home on Hawthorne Street. Her maternal aunt, Ida German, offered her support, and Lewis moved to Digby to live with her. She spent the rest of her life in this county, and painted it many times, as can be seen in *White House and Digby Gut*, 1960s.

Maud Lewis, *White House and Digby Gut*, 1960s, oil on board, 30.0 x 35.1 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

"LIVE-IN OR KEEP HOUSE"

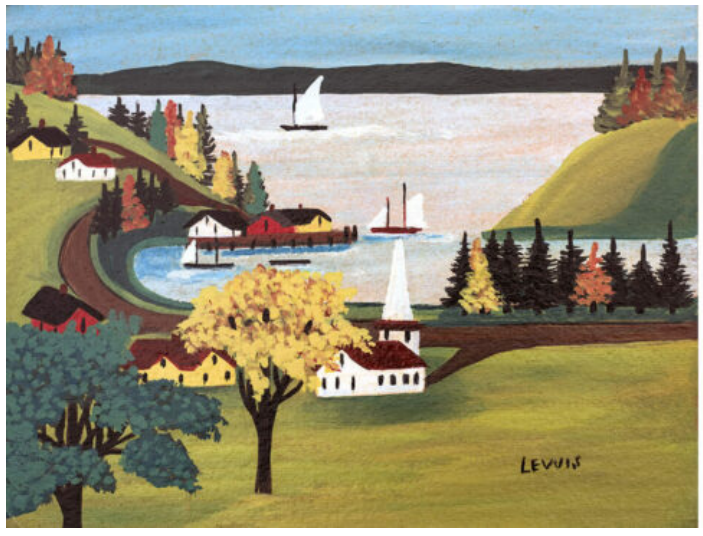
Maud Lewis may have moved to Digby, but she did not live with her aunt Ida for long. In the autumn of 1937, Everett Lewis, a forty-four-year-old fish peddler, put up advertisements in some of the local stores. He was looking for a woman to "live-in or keep house" for his small house in Marshalltown, just outside of Digby.

Nova Scotia Alms House, c.1891, photographer unknown.

Everett was born in 1893 and raised in the Alms House, known locally as the "Poor Farm." In those days before social welfare programs, the Alms House was an institution where people without means were sent by the authorities. Residents were expected to work on the farm or at outside jobs to subsidize their forced accommodations. Everett's father had abandoned his family and they were sent to the Alms House as indigent. His mother was eventually released from the Poor Farm to become the housekeeper to a local farmer. Everett worked as a labourer throughout his childhood, receiving little schooling, only completing the first grade. He never did learn to read or write.

Before Everett married Maud Dowley, he made his living selling fish from door to door in Digby County. He had an old Model T Ford that allowed him to bring fish bought from boats at the wharf to farms and homes further inland. He also did occasional work on farms and in lumber camps. In the 1920s he purchased a small plot of land adjacent to the Poor Farm from Reuben Aptt, the man for whom his mother was housekeeper. In 1926 he bought a small house and moved it by ox team to this land. Although the tiny white building would not have needed much keeping, he did not receive any responses to his ad. Except for one.

One morning in late 1937 Everett found Maud Dowley standing on his doorstep. She had walked from her Aunt Ida's house in Digby, through the small village of Conway and along the railroad tracks to Marshalltown, a distance of about six miles. The two apparently did not immediately hit it off, and Everett walked her back to the railroad underpass, about a mile down the road, and then left her to walk back to Digby on her own. A few days later she returned to the house, and they struck a bargain: she would move in with Everett, but on one condition—she was not to be a housekeeper, but his wife. She lived there for the rest of her life, and the local area became one of the main subjects of her art, as can be seen in *Smith's Cove, Digby County*, c.1952.



LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Smith's Cove, Digby County*, c.1952, oil on pulpboard, 23.0 x 30 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Home of Maud Lewis, 1951, photograph by John Collier Jr.

The couple married on January 16, 1938, and Maud Lewis moved into the one-room house by the side of the highway. It is small by any definition: thirteen and half feet of frontage, twelve and half feet wide at its side, and just fourteen feet, four inches high at its peak. The house is a single storey, though its attic was used as a sleeping loft. The ground floor walls are just under six feet from floor to ceiling. Many visitors to the house over the years reported that Everett had to tilt his head to avoid hitting the ceiling when he stood.

The house had two windows on the ground floor, and there was a small window in the sleeping loft. It had little insulation and was heated by a large cast-iron cook stove. The concrete foundation had a shallow space at the back of the house (the site sloped downward from the highway) that the couple used for cold storage. There was no electricity or running water. The toilet facilities were an outhouse in the yard, and bathing was done with a wash basin or small tub filled from the well, with water heated on the stove.

Maud Lewis, *Everett Plowing*, 1960s, oil on board, 45.8 x 61 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

On their wedding day Lewis was thirty-six years old (although she claimed to be thirty-four), and she had little to bring to the marriage—no land or other possessions, and no money from her family. She was physically unable to do the sort of job outside the home that would have been normal for working-class women of her time in rural Nova Scotia: working in a fish plant, or cooking in a lumber camp, for instance. As the daughter of a skilled tradesman, Lewis had not been raised in the working class, where even the children would be expected to find employment of some sort in the plants, camps, and fields. Now, with the deaths of her parents and the estrangement from her brother, she had been left to the charity of her aunt. Her marriage to Everett introduced her

to a world of poverty that she had not previously known. It was a community of rural labour, work that Lewis would later represent in paintings such as *Everett Plowing*, 1960s.

While Everett had advertised for someone to keep house, that is not how the relationship between the two worked out. Lewis was soon unable to handle even routine chores. Her arthritis, a progressive and degenerative disease, caused her hands to gnarl up into tightly closed fists, and her back and neck conditions made it very difficult for her to climb stairs or lift anything heavy. Eventually, Everett did all the household work while Lewis found another way to contribute: she began to paint again, first the cards that she had used to sell in Yarmouth, and then the paintings that would secure her fame. She also began to paint her home, which is now known as Maud Lewis's Painted House and on display in the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Detail of the restored kitchen area in the Painted House, n.d., Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

PAINTINGS FOR SALE

Since her teen years Maud Lewis had been making and selling cards both door to door and in shops. After marrying Everett in 1938, she began painting again in earnest, making cards for sale. In the warm months of May to October the

couple would tour the back roads in Everett's car, selling fish and brightly painted cards. Lewis, always shy, would stay in the car while Everett did the bargaining.

In 1939 Everett took a job as a night watchman at the neighbouring Poor Farm, which meant that he no longer had his regular route and customers. Instead, Lewis painted a colourful sign to go on their house and began selling work directly from there. She also started making paintings, which sold for more than the cards and whose sales were not limited mainly to holidays. Through the 1940s she worked on both cards and paintings, as well as commissions, such as a series of shutters she made for an American family with a summer home in the area. Eventually she stopped making cards for sale altogether.

Maud Lewis, *Paintings for Sale*, 1960s, oil on wood, 76 x 61.0 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

By the 1950s Lewis had developed what would become her major subjects: the family group of cats, her long-lashed oxen, sleigh and carriage rides, and her couple in a Model T, among others. Everett soon took on the role of Lewis's main salesman and her assistant in getting paint and boards for her paintings. For many years he cut the boards to size, though by the end of her life she was buying Masonite pre-cut to set dimensions.

Lewis's increasing popularity came at a cost. Her arthritis caused her constant pain, which was only exacerbated by the cramped conditions under which she worked, hunched over a small table as she produced painting after painting. That her work remained so bright and cheerful despite her health and difficult living situation is one of the most remarkable aspects of Lewis's life story.

The location of Maud and Everett's house, by the side of the main road connecting Yarmouth and Digby, along the route to Annapolis Royal, Grand Pré, and, eventually, Halifax, made it a natural location for a roadside business. The summer tourist season, with Americans and travellers from the rest of Canada arriving by the Yarmouth and Digby ferries, supported many small businesses in rural Nova Scotia, fuelled by a postwar boom in tourism that affected all of North America.

The increased prosperity after the Second World War, more reliable automobiles, and investments in better roads all served to bring customers to the little house in Marshalltown. Passersby could stop and see examples of Lewis's work, and if they bought a work, they would also leave with a sweet pea boutonniere from Everett's garden. Early on she also painted on scallop shells, which were widely available on the Digby beaches. These shells, painted with

cats, flowers, and butterflies, were used as dishes and ashtrays. In time, she stopped making them in favour of her paintings.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Bird Scallop Shell*, n.d., oil on shell, 9.5 x 9.5 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Black Cat Scallop Shell*, n.d., oil on shell, 9.5 x 9.5 cm, private collection.

Maud and Everett did little to promote her work; their roadside business was entirely dependent upon people driving by and deciding to stop. Sales happened only in Nova Scotia's brief summer period, and Lewis painted throughout the winter months to ensure enough stock for the coming season. Over the decade of the 1950s her reputation continued to grow with local people and visitors alike. Stopping at Mrs. Lewis's to buy a painting or two became part of many people's summer rituals. As a story in the *Halifax Chronicle* noted on her death in 1970, "visitors soon crowded her tiny cottage, all anxious for her to produce for them examples of her art."[6] One such visitor was Sally Tufts, who visited with her parents while they were vacationing in the Digby area. "I was fascinated by how small the House was," she told Lance Woolaver, "and amazed that every inch was painted in bright colours."[7]

In the early 1960s, Claire Stenning and Bill Ferguson, who ran an antique shop and art gallery in Bedford called Ten Mile House, began to show Lewis's work. They were among her first supporters, and they made many efforts to get her work noticed outside of Digby County. In their gallery they sold framed paintings by Maud Lewis—for $10, twice what an unframed piece would cost if bought directly from the artist. They also had silkscreen prints made of Lewis's work, in efforts to find new markets, but the low price point of her paintings made all these efforts go in vain. Anything they tried to do to make the paintings more widely available ran against the rocks of Maud and Everett's insistence at keeping the prices low. As Stenning told an interviewer in 1965, "They're afraid to charge very much for the paintings because they're afraid that they will lose their market."[8]

Maud and Everett Lewis in front of the Painted House, c.1963, photographer unknown.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Maud Lewis's painting career would likely have remained a mostly local phenomenon but for Halifax freelance journalist Cora Greenaway, another early promoter of Lewis. Greenaway produced an interview with Lewis for the CBC Radio program *Trans-Canada Matinee* that aired in February 1964. The interview sparked public interest and in July 1965 the *Star Weekly* (Toronto) sent freelance writer Murray Barnard from Halifax to write about Lewis. He was accompanied by photojournalist Bob Brooks, whose images of Lewis and her painted house have become iconic. The *Star Weekly*, which was included in the Saturday edition of Canada's largest circulation newspaper, the *Toronto Star*, created an enormous amount of curiosity about, as its headline read, "The Little Old Lady Who Paints Pretty Pictures." "Among the brightest and most joyful pictures coming out of picturesque Nova Scotia at present," wrote Barnard, "are those done by a little old lady named Maude Lewis who admirers call Canada's Grandma Moses [Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1860–1961)]."[9]

Many people wrote to Lewis requesting paintings after the article ran, creating a rush on her work that never abated for the rest of her lifetime. (In those days, a letter addressed to "Mrs. Maud [or Maude] Lewis, Marshalltown, Nova Scotia" was sure to find its way to the tiny house beside the highway.) Lewis did not allow her growing fame to change her subject matter, continuing to depict her nostalgic images of the local past, such as the horse-drawn sleigh, as well as the animals and plants she saw in her day-to-day life, such as the cheerful goldfinches amidst the apple blossoms of *Yellow Birds*, c.1960s.

Maud Lewis, *House and Ox Cart by the River*, 1960s, oil on board, 33 x 39.4 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Lewis painted variations of this scene several times, and one version was featured in the CBC program about her work.

That same year, Maud and Everett were visited by a camera crew from the CBC television program *Telescope*. The crew interviewed the couple, as well as their neighbour, Kathleen MacNeil, who acted as Lewis's secretary and adviser, answering the many letters she received and mailing paintings to people who sent cheques and cash in the mail. In the interview, Mrs. MacNeil recounted how Lewis was uncomfortable taking money from people for paintings that she hadn't completed as yet, feeling that she should only get paid for work that existed. The orders just kept coming, however, spurred in no small part by the media attention.

The *Telescope* program is one of very few instances we have of Maud Lewis speaking about her painting and where she found her signature style. "I put the same things in, I never change," she said. "Same colours and same designs." She went on to talk about where her imagery came from: "I imagine I'm painting from memory, I don't copy much. I just have to guess my work up, 'cause I don't go nowhere, you know. I can't copy any scenes or nothing. I have to make my own designs up."[10]

Also interviewed on the program were Claire Stenning and Bill Ferguson, from Ten Mile House, who had been trying to increase the market for Lewis's work as well as attempting to raise the prices. She refused. By the mid-1960s the paintings were still five dollars, and Lewis could hardly keep up with the demand. For Lewis, fame meant little but increased work. Despite the added household income brought by the increasing demand for her paintings, no improvements were made to the couple's day-to-day lives: the house never had running water or electricity, and Everett never bought a car.

Letter from Maud Lewis to Mrs. Chaplin, July 1957, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

In addition to Stenning and Ferguson, painter John Cook (1918–1984) was interviewed, and he was among the first to describe Lewis's work as art, calling it "a direct statement of things experienced or imagined."[11] Characterizing her use of colour and drawing as "forthright," he concluded emphatically that her paintings were "definitely works of art."[12] This was a change from Murray Barnard, for example, who described Lewis as a "primitive" artist, "concerned with everyday experience" as opposed to "the prevailing art forms."[13] Whether Lewis's art needed a qualifier such as "primitive" has been long debated, but little doubt now remains about her status as an artist in her own right. Asked by the CBC interviewer what she wanted most out of life, Lewis was characteristically modest: "Well, I'd like to have a little more room, to put my paints and stuff. I'd like to have a trailer. I imagine it costs too much for a trailer. I couldn't afford that."[14]

FINAL YEARS

In her last years Maud Lewis had an increasingly difficult time keeping up with the demand for her works, and Everett helped by preparing her Masonite panels and doing some of the underpainting. Everett eventually began helping her with the actual images, painting some of the backgrounds and filling in the colours of some of the central figures. Nonetheless, her production fell off. She began using cardboard stencils made by Everett of her major themes, the oxen, cats, and covered bridges, to aid her. Everett also started making his own paintings, influenced by Lewis's work, and often using the same stencils that he had made for her. In works such as *Sailboat*, 1975, we see Everett

experimenting with a subject Maud had depicted many times, as can be seen in her painting *Untitled (Ship at Dock)*, 1960s.

LEFT: Everett Lewis, *Sailboat*, 1975, acrylic on board, 44.1 x 53.2 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Untitled (Ship at Dock)*, 1960s, oil on pulpboard, private collection.

For the last few years of her life she worked in a used trailer set up beside the house, an arrangement to have extra space. However, her arthritis caused her more and more pain, and painting became increasingly difficult. In 1968 she fell and broke her hip, after which her health went into rapid decline. Still, when she went into hospital she made cards for her nurses. In 1970 Lewis died in the hospital and was buried in Everett's family plot in Marshalltown. Her name is listed under that of his parents and his own, as Maud Dowley.

Everett Lewis controlled the money in their house, and by the end of Maud's life he had a reputation as a miser—stories circulated that he had money buried in the backyard, or under the floorboards. After her death he spent even less and let the property decay. When Everett was eighty-six years old a young man broke into the house looking for the rumoured treasure. Everett surprised him, and in the ensuing struggle was killed. He left over $22,000 in a Digby bank account, as well as Mason jars full of cash hidden around the property. Lance Woolaver estimates that Everett may have had as much as $40,000 on his death.[15]

LEFT: View of the Lewis family headstone, Marshalltown, Digby County, Nova Scotia, n.d., photograph by Robert Hersey. RIGHT: View of the Maud Lewis memorial in Marshalltown, Digby County, Nova Scotia, n.d., photograph by Robert Hersey. The memorial was designed by Brian MacKay-Lyons.

After Everett's death, the house and land were inherited by one of his relatives, who sold it to the Maud Lewis Painted House Society in 1980. While the house was later acquired by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the society decided that some sort of memorial was needed for the site. In 1997, they received a proposal for a memorial structure designed by Brian MacKay-Lyons, who offered to donate his services. The design, a steel structure with bright spots of colour from a red chimney that is illuminated from the inside, was meant to highlight the sombre poverty of Lewis's existence, which she overcame through her art.

Maud Lewis died as one of Nova Scotia's best-known artists, with her obituaries describing her as an "internationally known primitive style artist,"[16] and how "in art circles, critics were high in their praise of her primitive style and the colourfulness of her paintings."[17] The *Halifax Chronicle*'s sub-heading to their story stated plainly, "She Gained International Fame."[18] Over the subsequent decades her fame has only increased. Paintings that she sold for five dollars now reach tens of thousands of dollars at auction, and her works hang in prominent art galleries across Canada. She is renowned for her smile and for her perseverance in the face of poverty, disability, and chronic pain. Her life was not always happy, and indeed, had many shadows in it. But despite all of that, her paintings remain as a testament to her optimism and courage in the face of adversity. As she told *Telescope* in 1965, "I'm contented here. I ain't much for travel anyway. Contented. Right here in this chair. As long as I've got a brush in front of me, I'm all right."[19]

Maud Lewis in her home, 1965, photograph by Bob Brooks.

KEY WORKS

Maud Lewis painted from memory and her imagination, but she also used found images that she adapted to her own style. She repeated subjects when she determined that one was particularly popular, often making dozens of versions of the same scene, and over her lifetime she painted hundreds of works, often at a pace of two or three a day. Because of the serial nature of so much of her work from the 1950s onwards, this section explores the key themes of her paintings throughout her career. They reveal Lewis's delight in an imagined environment and yearning for the past as well as the evolution of her style and drive to create a personal world, one that culminated in a masterpiece, her painted house.

CHILD FEEDING SQUIRRELS C.1940S

Maud Lewis, *Child Feeding Squirrels*, c.1940s
Oil on pulpboard, 29.7 x 29.3 cm
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

For twenty years before her marriage, Maud Lewis painted greeting cards that she sold door to door in Yarmouth. This painting of a child feeding squirrels bridges those cards and the painted landscapes she began to make once she had moved in with her husband, Everett, in his tiny house in Marshalltown. Made in the early 1940s, this image gives hints of what Lewis's work from the 1920s and 1930s may have looked like.

In her early work Lewis tended to copy elements of existing imagery from seasonal cards and other media. *Child Feeding Squirrels* is a complex composition with a clearly defined foreground and background. It was certainly taken from a source image (the child's clothing, the buttons along his or her pants, the clogs, and the head scarf all point to a source far from Digby or Yarmouth Counties). The multiple curving lines in this work—the overhanging branch, the line of the lakeshore, the hill in the background, the child's crouching posture—also suggest a more sophisticated compositional strategy than usually seen in her paintings. Through the 1950s and 1960s they became less detailed, but we see here that she was not always working wholly in that manner—her work evolved as she created her unique style.

Lewis's arthritis was progressive, and over the decades her physical capabilities dwindled. Her style developed as much to overcome these challenges as it did as a response to what her audience demanded. In this work, the flat blocks of colour in the grass and water and the treatment of the evergreens are familiar from later Lewis paintings, such as *Fishing Schooner in the Bay of Fundy*, n.d.,
as is the autumn coloration, seen in works such as *Feeding the Horses*, n.d.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Fishing Schooner in the Bay of Fundy*, n.d., oil on board, 29.8 x 35.6 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Feeding the Horses*, n.d., oil on pulpboard, 22.7 x 30.7 cm, private collection.

Lewis's style evolved through a process of simplification, of reducing the amount of information in a painting to just enough to convey her intention. *Child Feeding Squirrels* features many different elements and is designed to move the eye around the picture. This compositional strategy, common in illustrations in books, magazines, and commercial ephemera, is almost certainly a remnant of the source image rather than the result of any conscious strategy of her own. With no formal training, Lewis composed by imitation, and then by her own intuitive feel for the subject. This painting, superficially more sophisticated than many of her later images, is most interesting as a sign of the roots of Lewis's mature work. If she had continued to paint like this, it is doubtful that her art would have gained much interest at all, as it is essentially copying rather than creating.

FLOWERS WITH CANDLE LANTERN C.1943

Maud Lewis, *Flowers with Candle Lantern*, c.1943
Oil on plywood, 171.6 x 47.2 cm
Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley

In the early 1940s an American family with a holiday home in Yarmouth County commissioned a series of shutters from Maud Lewis, and *Flowers with Candle Lantern* was among the set. Doing commissions was not unusual for her, as she sometimes created paintings in response to requests, such as her portrait of a young boy and his grey cat, or her painting of *The Bluenose*, c.1960s. This shutter, though, and the other seven she completed for the Chaplins, was the biggest commission of her career, and as a group the shutters represent the largest work she ever undertook, barring her painted house. She never made paintings again at this scale, each of which, at over five feet in height, was taller than her.

The Chaplin family had been steady customers for her greeting cards, and they commissioned two sets of shutters, one with a wintry Christmas theme, and the other featuring spring and summer scenes. This painting of flowers climbing a candle lantern on a post would have graced the Chaplins' home in the summer months. The shutters for this season feature flowering plants with butterflies and songbirds.

Left to right: Maud Lewis, *White Flowers with Blue Birds*, c.1943, oil on plywood, 159.7 x 43.2 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Maud Lewis, *Fountain with Birds*, c.1943, oil on wood, 169 x 42.4 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Maud Lewis, *Flowers with Yellow Bird*, c.1943, oil on plywood, 160.2 x 42.8 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Maud Lewis, *Wishing Well and Flowers*, c.1943, oil on plywood, 169 x 42.4 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

The family would change the shutters when they visited for Thanksgiving and Christmas. All of the winter shutters also have a black background. This set features Christmas themes, such as an image of Santa Claus, or figures carolling and cycling in a wintry landscape.

The shutters were among the only vertical works Lewis made. It was not a lucrative endeavour: as author Lance Woolaver recounts, "the price as paid by the Chaplins was seventy cents per shutter, barely enough to cover the paint which covered the shutters."[1] Interestingly, she repeated many of the themes from the summer shutters in the painted storm door and front door on her own house. The format she used in the shutters of black backgrounds and colourful images, while not repeated in any of her stand-alone paintings, does reappear in at least one of her many "paintings for sale" signs, which adorned her house in the 1950s.

Because the shutters spent so much time out of doors, they needed extensive restoration work, carried out at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. A selection are on long-term loan there, and hang in the Maud Lewis Gallery.

DEER IN WINTER C.1950

Maud Lewis, *Deer in Winter*, c.1950
Oil on pulpboard, 29.6 x 35.9 cm
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

This relatively early Maud Lewis image of two deer looking across a valley at a small village has many elements that became notable in her style. These include a sense of contained space—the viewer's eye is led from the foreground through the entire composition until it is stopped by the line of hills in the background. The painting is also notable for its treatment of light. Despite being characterized as "without shadows," her work often did, in fact, have shadows.[1] Here they are clearly visible, cast by objects lit by the variegated light of the setting (or rising) sun. The three hills are shadowed at their crests. The trees in the foreground cast blue shadows on the snow, as do the stand of trees and the buildings in the middle ground. The three leafless hardwood trees also display shadows on their trunks. The pond (or stream) in the middle ground is shadowed by snowbanks and reflects the orange of the sun.

The Nova Scotia Lewis depicts is a rosy version of its past and her work is essentially nostalgic. Here the tiny village—a few houses and barns flanking a white wooden church—lies nestled in its peaceful valley. There are no signs of modernity—no power lines or even a road. The unlikely pair of white tail deer—a doe and a stag—look out onto the scene much as the viewer of the painting does. Here we have nature observing culture, a bucolic and wishful expression of harmony between the human and animal worlds.

Maud Lewis, *Deer Crossing Stream*, 1960s, oil on board, 129.1 x 34.4 cm, Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia.

Lewis often painted deer in scenes that are reminiscent of illustrations from calendars depicting hunting scenes, such as the leaping stag in *Deer Crossing Stream*, 1960s. That sense of action is absent in this painting, where the image shares a certain romanticism with many of her village scenes.

The deer are framed by the trees at their sides, which overarch them in what, in another season, would have been a sort of bower. The internal frame is a common compositional element employed by Lewis in her paintings of oxen and cats, which are often shown surrounded by floral borders. Here the scene is framed like a stage set, with the deer serving as actors or audience, depending on our point of view. This device is a common graphic technique, used to this day in advertising and calendar imagery, to focus the eye on the central figures. Lewis's adoption of it, and her use of natural elements to create the framing effect, highlight how she absorbed the lessons of the graphic work she saw in magazines and other sources, mining them to create her own visual strategies.

THREE BLACK CATS 1955

Maud Lewis, *Three Black Cats*, 1955
Oil on pulpboard, 30.5 x 30.7 cm
Private collection

This image is among Maud Lewis's most iconic works, perhaps her most famous composition. Lewis's childhood cat was named "Fluffy," and in later years she painted several versions of her memory of this black, longhaired family cat from Yarmouth.[1] Usually portrayed with two kittens, black cats are among her most common, and popular, subjects. In this painting the cats are framed by two sprigs of flowering apple blossoms and sit amid a bed of tulips. In addition to her "portraits" of black cats, she also depicted white cats, though usually without kittens, and, in one instance, a grey cat with its child owner (a commission).

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *White Cat* [2], 1960s, oil on pulpboard, 31.1 x 33.8 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Untitled (boy with grey cat),* 1969, oil on Masonite, 30 x 30.5 cm, private collection.

Lewis devised simple, yet effective, compositional motifs to make these images, including the yellow rings for eyes, the three bold strokes of colour for the tulips, and the lace-like quality of the apple blossoms, done with repeated stabs of colour. The flatness of this image, with the cats sitting right in the foreground against the flat background, makes it quite striking and strongly graphic, like a flag or a logo. Not incidentally, it also made the image easier to paint, an important consideration, especially through the 1960s, for what was one of her bestselling images.

The media attention she started receiving from the mid-1960s onward generated huge interest in her paintings, and she had a hard time keeping up with the demand. She painted this image dozens, if not hundreds, of times. The cats were traced from stencils made by Everett in her later years, as were the other popular images often ordered by customers. Her husband also assisted with making many of the works, doing the outlines of the central figures and even painting some of the backgrounds.

Three Black Cats bears some similarities—in composition, if not in content—to the traditional icon painting of the Eastern Orthodox Church. These religious paintings are highly stylized and formalized, and their images are often limited and repetitive. Art educator Harold Pearse argued that paintings such as *Three Black Cats* "are iconic, not only because of the restricted subject matter and rendering style, but because, through repetition, they create an ongoing serialized narrative."[2] That is, their reiteration in Lewis's work tells a story about her vision of an idealized Nova Scotian past.

In recent years, the strong graphic qualities of *Three Black Cats* have led to the image's being easily adapted into other forms. The cats can be found on pins, fridge magnets, aprons, T-shirts, socks, dust pans, umbrellas, trays, and even dish cloths. It is a fitting proliferation given Lewis's own history of finding influences in just such decorated consumer goods.

MODEL T FORD C.1955–65

Maud Lewis, *Model T Ford*, c.1955–65
Oil on board, 29.8 x 34.8 cm
Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley

Maud Lewis may well have based this image of a couple in a Model T Ford on her memories of the first year of her marriage. Everett Lewis owned an old Model T Ford when Maud met him in 1938, and later that year, in the first spring and summer of their marriage, she would accompany him on his rounds around Digby County as he sold fish. By the fall of 1938 Everett was also offering cards Maud had painted for sale to his customers, recalling her door-to-door card selling in Yarmouth in the 1920s and 1930s.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Model T on Tour*, 1960s, oil over graphite on board, 28.9 x 34.4 cm, Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Nova Scotia. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Carriage and Dog*, n.d., oil on pulpboard, private collection.

In 1939 Everett became the night watchman at the neighbouring "Poor Farm," the local name for the Alms House, and stopped selling fish. Not needing the Ford for work, he eventually sold it. Maud Lewis may have enjoyed the relative freedom of travelling around Digby County for only a few short months, but the memories became an important source of her imagery. She painted many versions of this happy couple in their old Ford, such as *Model T on Tour*, 1960s, but it is not a portrait—the figures are too generalized to be recognized as individuals. In Lance Woolaver's book *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis*, one version of this work, then owned by the Woolaver family, was identified as *Maud and Ev*.[1] But as Lewis did not title her paintings, that was surely a later appellation. The image is now known as *Model T Ford*.

This painting is also notable for the bright spring flowers lining the road. The tulips in the foreground are one of Lewis's most common decorative flourishes, seen in paintings such as *Carriage and Dog*, n.d. It would be nice to think that the back roads of Digby County were lined with flowers, but that, of course, is only true in Lewis's depictions of that world.

THE BLUENOSE C.1960S

Maud Lewis, *The Bluenose*, c.1960s
Oil over graphite on board, 29 x 42.6 cm
Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia

In this painting Maud Lewis presents the *Bluenose*, an iconic Nova Scotian fishing schooner that, under Captain Angus Walters, won the International Fisherman's Race numerous times, including three in a row from 1921 to 1923. One of the most famous ships in the world in the 1920s and 1930s, the *Bluenose* has graced the Canadian dime since 1937 (designed by sculptor Emanuel Hahn, 1881–1957). In 1963 a replica was commissioned by the Oland Brewery as a pleasure yacht and promotional vehicle for its Schooner beer brand. The *Bluenose II* was built in the same Lunenburg shipyard, by some of the same workers, as the original. It was gifted by the Olands to the province and now serves as "Nova Scotia's Sailing Ambassador." Lewis's painting dates from the mid-1960s and was likely a commission.

It is doubtful that Lewis ever saw the ship in person, but it was depicted in so many magazines, postcards, and various other souvenirs that images would have been easy for her to find. *The Bluenose* is one of the few paintings by Lewis that shows a subject from outside of Digby or Yarmouth Counties, although schooners would have been common in ports all along those shores

until well into the 1940s. Many of her sea scenes, such as *Fishing Schooner in the Bay of Fundy*, n.d., feature less famous sailing ships, as well as the ubiquitous Cape Islander fishing boats.

The painting is also notable for the treatment of the water, which, with its reflection of the schooner's hull, the bow wave, and the waves in the foreground, contributes to one of her most accomplished depictions of ships at sea. Seagulls wheel overhead, and two of Lewis's familiar red-coated figures are seen on the deck.

Fishing schooner, "Bluenose," n.d., photograph by W.R. MacAskill.

While *The Bluenose* was not a recurring theme for Lewis, it is an important painting in her body of work, as it clearly shows how she worked with images familiar to Nova Scotians and to tourists. Lewis's work depicts a vanished Nova Scotia that appealed to her clients, many of whom were vacationers. The Nova Scotia tourism promotion that would come to define so much of Lewis's posthumous legacy is presaged here. In time, Lewis would become as iconic as the *Bluenose*.

OXEN IN SPRING [TWO OXEN WITH YOKE] C.1960S

Maud Lewis, *Oxen in Spring* [*Two Oxen with Yoke*], c.1960s
Oil on pulpboard, 30.2 x 35.5 cm
Private collection, Nova Scotia

Traditionally named "Lion" and "Bright," ox teams were a familiar sight in rural Nova Scotia throughout Maud Lewis's life, and, as the daughter of a harness maker, she would have been quite familiar with the decorative harnesses that were then popular. Lewis painted oxen in every season of the year, often at work pulling wagons, sledges, and plows, but the composition of *Oxen in Spring* is one that she returned to again and again. Her oxen, shown as if posing for a portrait, display the Nova Scotia style of yoke, which sits just behind the oxen's horns.

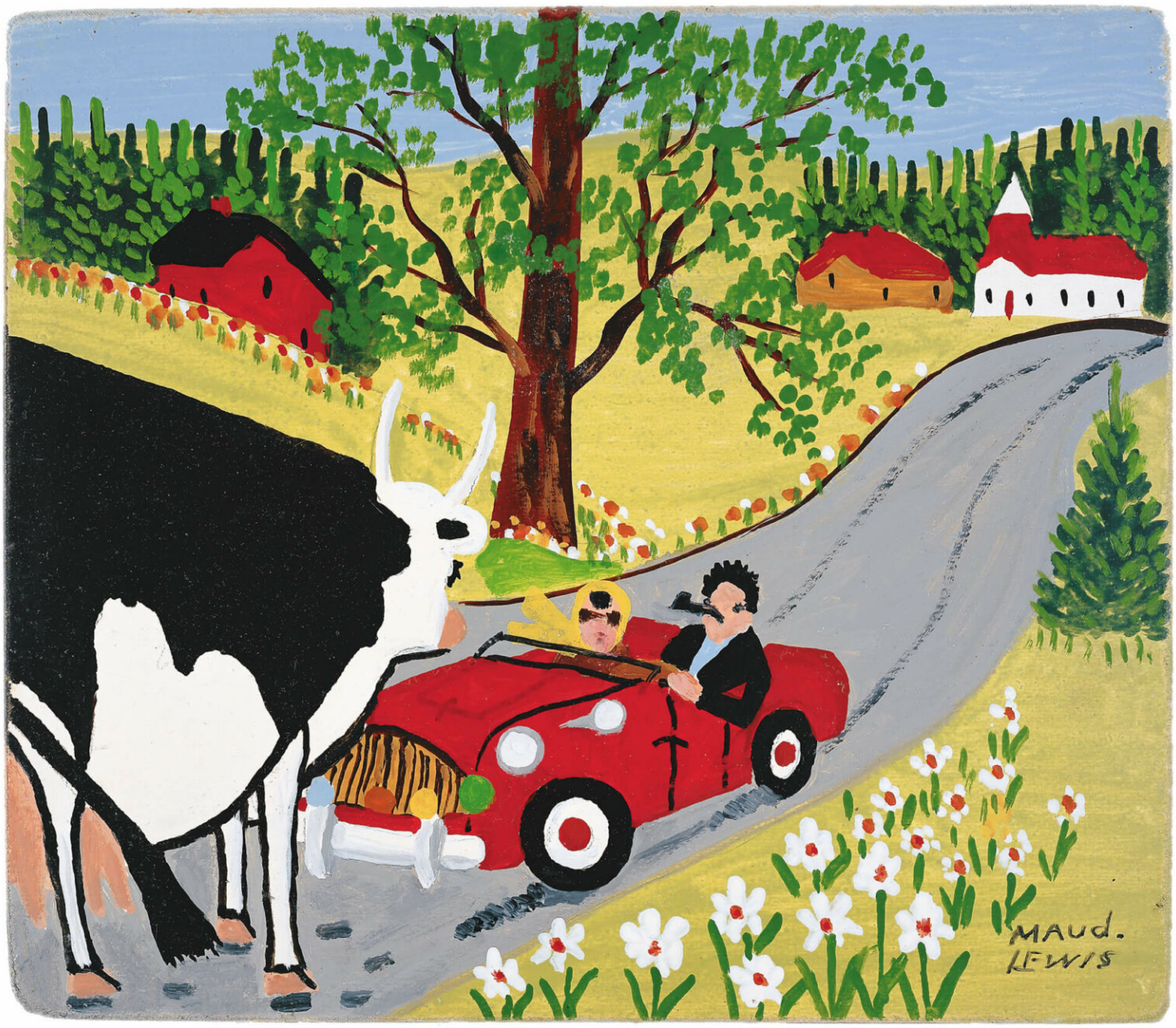
Prize yoke of oxen, Halifax, Nova Scotia, c.1950s.

Well into the early 1960s farmers in parts of rural Nova Scotia still used oxen to plow their fields. Images of ox teams in the spring, with apple trees in full bloom, were a popular representation of Nova Scotia in graphic art, often appearing in calendars or postcards. Lewis puts her unique spin on the subject with her frontal depiction of the oxen with their long eyelashes. This team is pictured in spring, with tulips (another signature theme of Lewis's) and flowering apple trees. The shallow composition, with tulips in the foreground and the oxen flanked by trees in blossom, repeats her familiar effect of a floral frame around the central figures.

In a recent exhibition of her work at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, eight versions of this image were displayed, depicting the oxen in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The animals themselves change but little from image to image, as the differences are grounded in the framing trees and flowers: apple blossoms in the spring, autumn colours for the fall, bare branches and snow for winter, and so on. In her later years Lewis used a stencil, cut from cardboard by Everett, to draw in the oxen before painting them, ensuring that the central figures were almost identical from work to work.

As with her depictions of black cats, her use of this flat, frontal format for painting the oxen has made it an iconic image, and it has become one of her most enduringly popular scenes. In 2020 a winter version of this image appeared on a Canadian postage stamp.

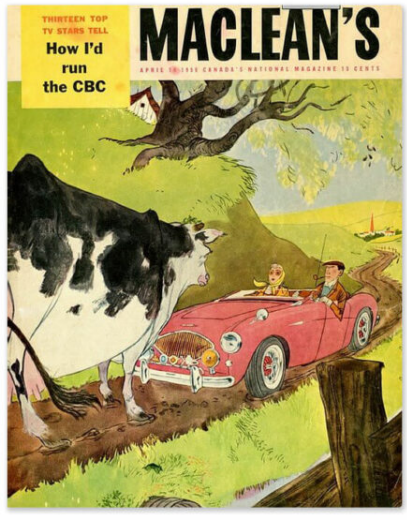
ROADSTER AND COW C.1960S

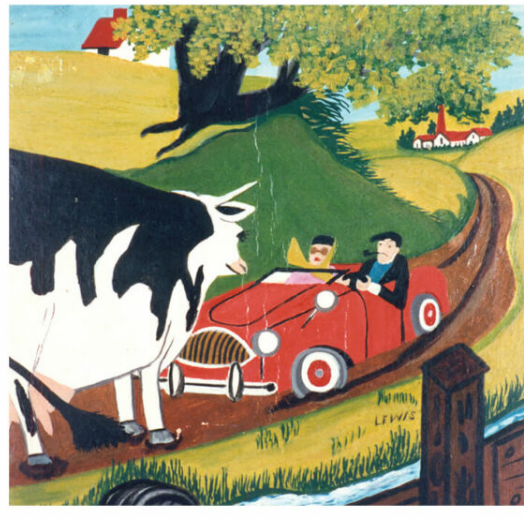


Maud Lewis, *Roadster and Cow*, c.1960s
Oil over graphite on particle board, 30.4 x 34.7 cm
Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia

This image of a couple in a convertible stopped by a cow in the middle of the road is unique among Maud Lewis's work. It shows a contemporary scene, which is relatively rare amongst her paintings, but more importantly it gives an insight into her process. That Lewis drew from media sources for some of her work had been informed supposition until Jeffrey Spalding (1951–2019), a former director of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, noted the similarity of this piece to the cover of an issue of *Maclean's* magazine. In the illustration by Oscar Cahén (1916–1956), a well-dressed couple in a convertible on a country road are stopped short by a large cow. Cahén was a member of the Toronto abstract art group Painters Eleven, but he was also one of Canada's leading illustrators. As Spalding wrote, "Cahén's *Maclean's* cover illustration of April 14, 1956, was the evident inspiration for a key work by Maud Lewis. We know of two versions,

there are likely more."[1] With this painting we can clearly see how Lewis used popular imagery as source material.





LEFT: Oscar Cahén, Cover of *Maclean's* magazine, April 14, 1956, The Cahén Archives.
RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Untitled*, n.d., private collection.

It is not known where Lewis saw this illustration: she may have encountered it in a doctor's waiting room, or perhaps it was brought to her by a neighbour. The subject may even have been a special request, as this theme is not one that she returned to repeatedly as with other subjects. That she used the work of other artists for source material should not be surprising. She was not alone, of course, in being influenced by popular images from magazines and advertising. These sources were also important for other artists in the Maritimes, such as Mary Pratt (1935–2018), who credited illustrated magazines with providing her with her first sense of what drawing and painting could be.

Lewis took inspiration where she found it, translating what she saw into her own distinctive style. She was isolated, indeed, but she was not cut off entirely from the modern world. In her version of the scene she has added distinctive touches familiar from her work: a red-roofed white church, flowers lining the road, and red and ochre buildings.

Roadster and Cow is one of the only instances where the source for one of Lewis's images is known. As with so many of her images, its eventual owners added their own interpretations. In *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis*, the other version of this painting is identified as depicting the original owner's son.[2]

YELLOW BIRDS C.1960S

Maud Lewis, *Yellow Birds*, c.1960s
Oil on board, 27.3 x 30 cm
Private collection

This painting of three yellow birds and flowers is atypical of Maud Lewis's larger body of work, but it reflects the type of composition she preferred for the interior decoration of her house. It relates more to the decorated storm door of the house, for instance, than to any of her landscapes. The floral pattern is emphatically flat and reminiscent of wallpaper or fabric patterns. There are no shadows here, certainly, but also no depth of field—the painting is all surface. Where it has similarities to other works is in its connection to Lewis's recurring image of the three black cats: a mother and two kittens, presented in a flat field, surrounded by flowers. Like the cats, this has become one of Lewis's most reproduced images.

LEFT: Restored door of Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown.
RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Three Black Cats*, n.d., oil on board, 30.2 x 30.2 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

Here the tangled boughs, with their bright blossoms, create a screen in the foreground that supports the birds, obviously goldfinches, with their yellow bodies and black wings and caps. (The black caps mark them all as male goldfinches, who, by the time the young are the size of these fledglings, will often take on the feeding responsibilities from the mother bird.) Lewis normally takes an expansive view, showing more of the landscape. This is the sort of scene she would only have observed up close, perhaps in the verges of her own yard. As Lance Woolaver wrote, "Maud enjoyed painting sweet peas, tulips and roses. The return of songbirds to the apple blossoms was for Maud an event worth recording."[1]

There are not multiple versions of this painting, as it was not a popular seller. That is unfortunate, as to contemporary eyes, at least, its exuberance and cheerfulness make it one of Lewis's most compelling images. It has also become one of her widely marketed images, appearing on book covers and on consumer goods such as mugs and T-shirts. At the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in Halifax there is even a "selfie-station" where visitors can have their pictures taken inside an enlarged version of this painting.

WINTER SLEIGH RIDE C.1960S

Maud Lewis, *Winter Sleigh Ride*, c.1960s
Oil on pulpboard, 33.0 x 35.5 cm
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

This work depicts a sleighing party, with three horse-drawn sleighs navigating a wintry valley. When the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia mounted the nationally touring exhibition *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* in 1997, *Winter Sleigh Ride* was displayed in a grouping of six similar works to highlight the serial nature of Maud Lewis's painting practice. "It is probably more useful to think of repeated images in folk art in terms of seriality than as commercial opportunism," wrote Harold Pearse of the exhibition, arguing that repeated imagery had more to do with the lives of the artists than with purely commercial concerns.[1] That conjunction is very apparent here: *Winter Sleigh Ride* combines the commercial aspects of Lewis's practice, which, after all, was rooted in the making of Christmas cards, with the nostalgia (for simpler pre-industrial times,

certainly, but more poignantly, for the simpler and secure childhood of her own memories) that is ever-present in her work.

The viewpoint in the painting is somewhat high, as if the viewer too were riding in a sleigh coming down the slope into the valley. The foreground features a sleigh and a snow-covered evergreen, which casts a blue shadow toward the lower left corner of the picture. The middle ground is occupied by a red covered bridge. The road curves broadly to the left, with two sleighs further along the track on the other side of the bridge. In the background is a small village, anchored by Lewis's familiar red-roofed white clapboard church, and four brightly coloured houses or barns (green, red, yellow, and ochre). The village sits at the base of a line of hills, effectively enclosing the scene rather than suggesting infinite space. Despite the three clearly defined zones in the painting, like almost all of Lewis's work it remains quite flat, an approach to composition that Pearse, among other critics, has described as "medieval-like."[2]

LEFT: Postage stamp featuring Maud Lewis, *Family and Sled*, c.1960s, oil on pulpboard, 31.6 x 35.4 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Postage stamp featuring Maud Lewis, *Team of Oxen in Winter*, 1967, oil over graphite on pulpboard, 28.9 x 34.1 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Like so much of her work, this image has been widely reproduced. In 2020 it was one of three Lewis paintings featured on Canadian postage stamps, a set that included one for domestic mail (featuring this painting), one for U.S. mail (depicting a pair of oxen), and one for international mail (showing *Family and Sled*, c.1960s).

PAINTED COOKIE TIN WITH FLOWERS C.1960S

Maud Lewis, *Painted Cookie Tin with Flowers*, c.1960s
Oil on metal, 21.0 x 15.8 x 15.8 cm
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

This cookie tin covered in painted flowers is one of many decorated objects that Maud Lewis surrounded herself with that were not created for sale, though she would do commissioned trays and even dustpans if requested. Instead, these objects were for her own pleasure. Like the painted surfaces in her house, the household items brought light and colour to Lewis's living space. The cookie tin, which would have been used every day, is one of the most intimate of her works, so much so that it was included in the 2015 exhibition *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists* at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston, Ontario.

Maud Lewis's cookie tin in her Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

It is in items such as her cookie tin and painted bread boxes that we see a more traditional approach to vernacular folk art, reminiscent of the painted furniture and tools from nineteenth-century Nova Scotia and elsewhere. Over the years there has been a distinction drawn between traditional and contemporary folk art in Nova Scotia, especially by historian Richard Field, who looks at function as the key difference. He notes "the union of function and aesthetic that is characteristic of traditional folk art," while "contemporary folk art seldom includes function as part of its inspiration."[1] Like the makers of historical folk art, Lewis made this with the intention of using it every day.

Because most of the decorated household items remained in the house after the Lewises' deaths, they deteriorated quite significantly, and were a major focus of restoration efforts. A common question from visitors to art galleries is about the rules of not touching the artifacts, even seemingly robust ones made out of materials such as stone and metal. The reasons for this prohibition were made abundantly clear in the restoration of the painted cookie tin. This lovely object features a grid pattern painted all over with floral decoration, like flowers growing up a trellis. Before conservation, the lower two-thirds of the tin were in relatively good shape, but the top third, where hands would hold it while taking off the lid, was badly corroded. The oils in human skin had stayed on the tin, and the rusting had concentrated where they were present. Luckily, much of the original paint was actually still there, under the rust layer that had grown up over the paint. The restored tin can now be seen at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

MAUD LEWIS'S PAINTED HOUSE N.D.

Maud Lewis, Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d.
Mixed media, 4.1 x 3.8 m
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax

Maud Lewis is unique among Canadian artists in that her home has become her best-known work of art. This small dwelling, which doubled as living and working space for Lewis and her husband Everett, was transformed by the artist over the years into a three-dimensional version of the bucolic subjects of her paintings. From the small corner where she set up the television tray that she used for painting, she could look out through both the door and the single window on the ground floor. Not content with the view outside, she painted colourful tulips on the window, and covered both the interior door and the exterior storm door with birds, butterflies, tulips, and other flowers.

Inside the house she painted two pairs of black and white swans—not sights one might expect to see in Digby County. Where the interior walls were not covered with brightly illustrated calendars, she created her own wallpaper. Even the stair-risers were decorated with bunches of blue forget-me-nots. The warming oven of the cookstove was painted. So too were canisters, the dust-pan, trays, and the breadbox. And not just painted once—over the years she painted and repainted the walls, furniture, and objects as the colours faded or were effaced by the weather, the heat from the stove, or simple wear and tear.

Panoramic view of the interior of the Painted House after restoration, photographer unknown.

This near-obsessive attention to the decoration of her living space adds an interesting note to our thinking about Lewis's painting. That she painted to make a living is uncontestable—the demands on her production meant that she spent more and more time painting images that were requested by customers, rather than the images she wanted to paint. But there was no profit in painting the interior of the house; in fact, by the mid-1960s there was little profit in selling to drop-by visitors. Far from seeing her painted house as an advertisement or enticement to stop and purchase her works, in 1964 she had Everett take down her "paintings for sale" sign.[1]

The house, perhaps, represents the one place where she could express her own creativity, and where we can see what she liked looking at. There is a randomness, a certain exuberance, in the way that the birds and butterflies seem to "flutter" on the storm door, or the big, bold floral patterns that she painted on the breadbox and warming oven, that suggests she may have felt constrained by the popular images she was making with such regularity. In the house—in her studio—she could be what she always denied being: an artist, with the building itself as her canvas.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Matchbox Holder with Painted Lady*, c.1960s, polychrome wood, 21 x 17 x 5.5 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Painted Yellow Breadbox with Two Doors*, c.1960s, oil on metal, 36.9 x 38.0 x 35.5 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

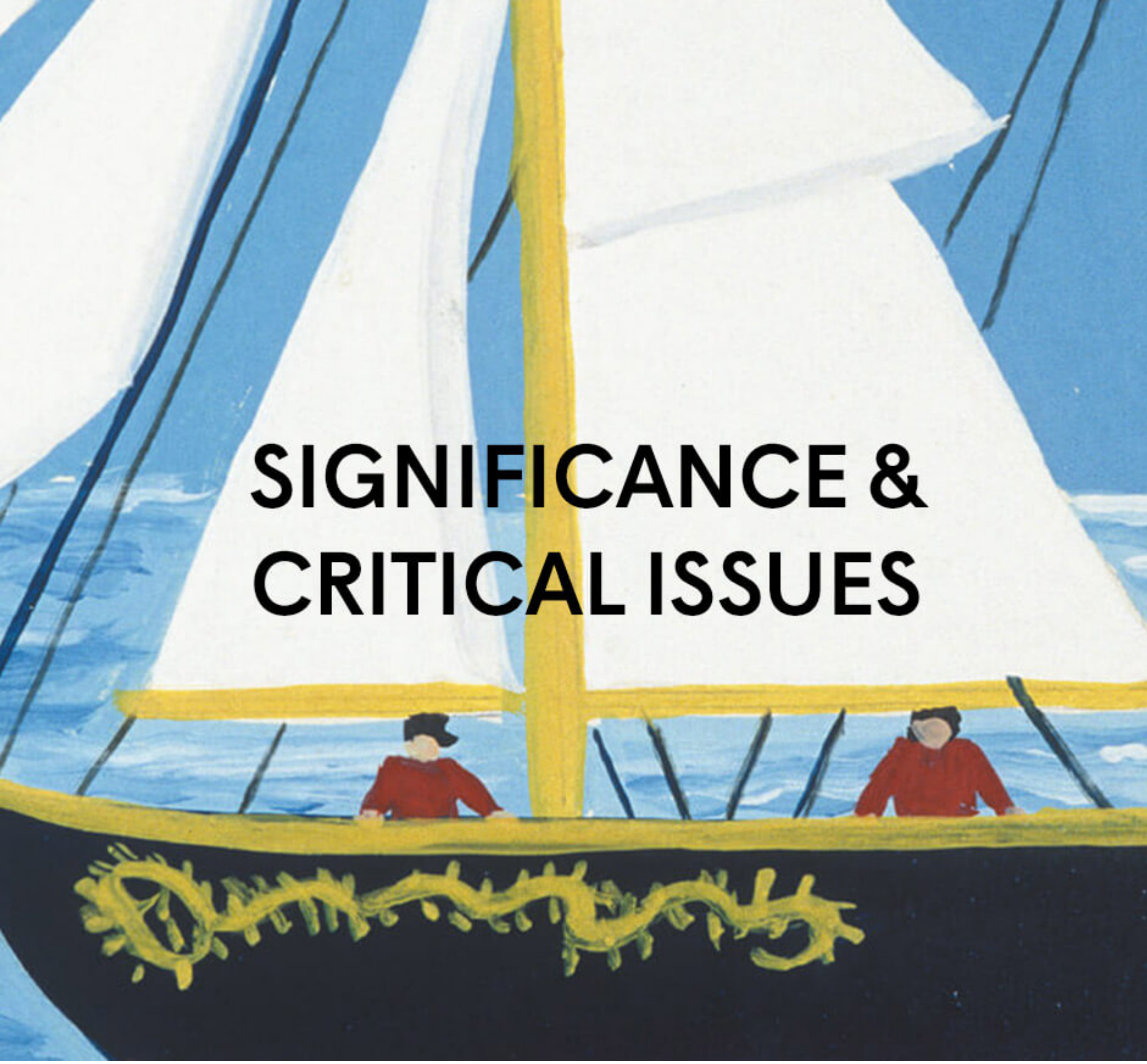
Lewis moved into the house with Everett after their marriage in 1938, and over the thirty-two years that she lived there she transformed it into a work of art. Everett's house, his proudest possession, had become Maud's finest creation. After her death in 1970, Everett made some changes, perhaps attempting to mark it, again, as his. He sold the painted storm door that was so iconic, for instance, painted the roof and gutters, and even decorated some of the outside shingles with small evergreen trees. But he left the interior alone, the painted

walls, furniture, household items, windows. Maud's presence was still visible there.

Everett never did maintain the house to any great standard, and that neglect only intensified after his wife's death. But while he lived, the house at least remained livable. As iconic as it had become, and as beloved as it was in Digby County, that delicate balance was upset by Everett's death and the house soon fell into disrepair. A group of local citizens had hoped to take on responsibility for the house, and in the spring of 1979 they founded the "Maud Lewis Painted House Society."[2]

Maud Lewis in the doorway of her home, 1961, photograph by Cora Greenaway.

The house was sold to a local man by Everett's estate in 1979. In 1980 it was acquired by the Society, whose members intended to repair it and open the house as a museum. The costs and logistics proved to be beyond their abilities, however, and the province of Nova Scotia acquired the house in 1984 and put it under the care of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. After storing the house for ten years, the gallery began extensive conservation efforts in earnest in 1994, culminating in the house's unveiling in its current home in Halifax. The house, built and rebuilt by other hands than Lewis's, stands now as her greatest work.



SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Maud Lewis's significance grew exponentially after her death, and in a way, there are three Maud Lewises: the artist, the icon, and the brand. The artist is celebrated with a permanent display of her work in Halifax and with national and international touring exhibitions. The icon is featured on Canadian stamps, is often cited as an example for people, especially children, living with physical challenges, and has been the subject of numerous books, plays, and films.

As a brand, she has become a symbol of Nova Scotia, central to the story of the province that successive Nova Scotia governments and institutions have chosen to tell to the rest of the world and a central figure in the creation of Nova Scotia Folk Art as a distinct style. Critical thought on Lewis's significance informs all three of these narratives, fuelling ever-increasing interest in her complex legacy and her deceptively simple work.

THE BUSINESS OF ART

Maud Lewis obviously enjoyed painting, as it was something that she had done from her childhood, when she began painting under the tutelage of her mother, Agnes (German) Dowley. But it was never simply a hobby, even in her youth. As Lewis grew older, whether from economic necessity or entrepreneurial ambition (and perhaps a mixture of the two), she and her mother turned their pastime of painting scenes into a small business, selling Christmas cards door to door in Yarmouth.


LEFT: Unknown [after Joseph Hoover and Currier & Ives], *American Winter Scene*, 1940s, offset lithography on paper laid on card, 35.0 x 53.2 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *The Skaters*, n.d., watercolour on card, 10.8 x 15.9 cm, Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.

Her first commercial enterprise mirrors the content of her earliest extant paintings. Her influences were the sentimental and nostalgic imagery made popular by the greeting card industry and by the makers of mass-produced prints such as Currier and Ives. Many of the early cards and paintings are clearly her versions of existing commercial imagery. *Children Waving at a Train*, c.1950s, for instance, features an antique steam engine flying American flags, and her Christmas cards often feature figures in Victorian clothing. Currier and Ives prints, in particular, would have been common in the homes of Yarmouth and Digby, and depict the sorts of scenes beloved by Lewis: country churches in the snow, sleigh rides, horse-drawn carriages and wagons, small farmsteads with placid animals.

MAUD LEWIS

Life & Work by Ray Cronin

These popular genre scenes were what the public demanded, both from the commercial operations—who put them on plates, tea towels, biscuit tins, and just about any other mass-produced item imaginable—but also from the painters of the day, many of whom worked for print and advertising companies as commercial artists. For instance, J.E.H. MacDonald (1873–1932), Franklin Carmichael (1890–1945), Frank H. Johnston (1888–1949), Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), and F.H. Varley (1881–1969), members of Canada's famous Group of Seven painters, worked as commercial artists for Grip Limited in Toronto, a printing house that produced imagery for advertising, package design, newspapers, and other applications.

Maud Lewis, *Children Waving at a Train*, c.1950s, oil on tin, 1.5 x 48.0 x 61.0 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

Perhaps from her lack of formal training, or because of her reliance on commercial graphic art as source material, Lewis always deflected any description of herself as an artist. She rarely travelled, and there were no art galleries or museums locally where she would have been exposed to examples of fine art painting and drawing. In a CBC television interview in 1965 she was asked about her influences. "My favourite painting?" she said. "I've never seen many paintings from other artists, you know, so I wouldn't know."[1] The images she would have observed would have all been the products of the commercial graphics industry, such as the calendars that can be seen festooning the walls of her house in a photograph of her and Everett from the mid-1960s. Lewis was not alone in this, of course; many twentieth-century artists had their first exposure to art through the commercial graphics industry, including Lewis's fellow Maritimer, painter Mary Pratt (1935–2018), who acknowledged the impact of commercial graphics on her own art.[2]

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Train Coming into Station*, c.1949/50, oil on board, private collection. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Village Scene with Sleigh Ride* [Christmas Card], c.1951, watercolour on embossed paper, 11.0 x 16.0 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

The other influence on Lewis's work, and perhaps the deciding one, was her customers. Simply put, she responded to what the market demanded—designs for cards and images that were not selling were quickly discarded for ones that were, and she had no compunctions about repeating popular imagery. She painted dozens of pairs of oxen, for example, and perhaps hundreds of her popular family of black cats. The market, as represented by her customers' preferences, played a part in honing her painting into what has become the recognizable Maud Lewis style.

PAINTING AN IDYLLIC PAST

The major themes in Maud Lewis's paintings all coalesce under one theme—a sentimental look back at the rural past of her part of Nova Scotia. In Lewis's painted world, life can seem to be one long succession of sleigh and carriage rides, blossoming fruit trees, sailing on calm waters, and just enough honest work to keep active—woodcutting, fishing, farming. In her paintings fields are plowed by teams of yoked oxen; people travel by horse-drawn sleighs, carriages, and wagons; and wind powers the boats that go out on the sea. These subjects appear in works such as *Haywagon*, 1940s, *Buggy Ride*, 1940s, and *The Bluenose*, c.1960s, as well as in historic photographs from Nova Scotia in the early 1900s. Her nostalgia is understandable, as her own life had undergone profound changes from her childhood, when she grew up in a comfortable home with supportive parents, to her adulthood, living in poverty with her husband. That personal change was mirrored by the societal change underway across rural Nova Scotia.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Haywagon*, 1940s, oil on pulpboard, 23 x 30.5 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Bill Spurr with his wagon, 1942, photographer unknown.

The tourists who bought so much of Lewis's work were seeking a simpler life away from the hustle and bustle of cities. In the postwar period, as now, Nova Scotia was marketed as an escape, a return to a simpler time. The poignancy of Lewis's physical challenges and the poverty in which she and Everett lived have been huge factors in the marketing of Maud Lewis, but it is also a fact—her days by any contemporary standard were poor, hard, and filled with pain and want. Who would blame her for being nostalgic?

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Buggy Ride*, 1940s, oil on board, 22.9 x 30.5 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Family with horse and buggy, possibly W.H. Buckley's family at their carriage, Guysborough, Nova Scotia, c.1910, photograph by William H. Buckley.

A certain innocent joyfulness permeates Lewis's paintings. Her skies are always blue, birds abound, flowers are in bloom, and the people depicted, whether working or playing, always seem to be cheerful and contented. She unabashedly made happy paintings, brightening up even the winter scenes with sunshine and colourful clothing, sleighs, and buildings. Sometimes, if the mood struck, she even added colourful fall hues to winter scenes, as she did in *The Sunday Sleigh Ride*, n.d. When asked about that, she would simply say, "It was the first snow fall."[3] The world in Lewis's paintings, while not entirely devoid of shadows, seemingly never saw rain, fog, or darkness. That was a deliberate decision on her part, of course, and as with the work of any artist, it reflected her vision of the world—or at least, the vision she wanted to communicate.

Maud Lewis, *The Sunday Sleigh Ride*, n.d., oil on board, 22.9 x 30.5 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

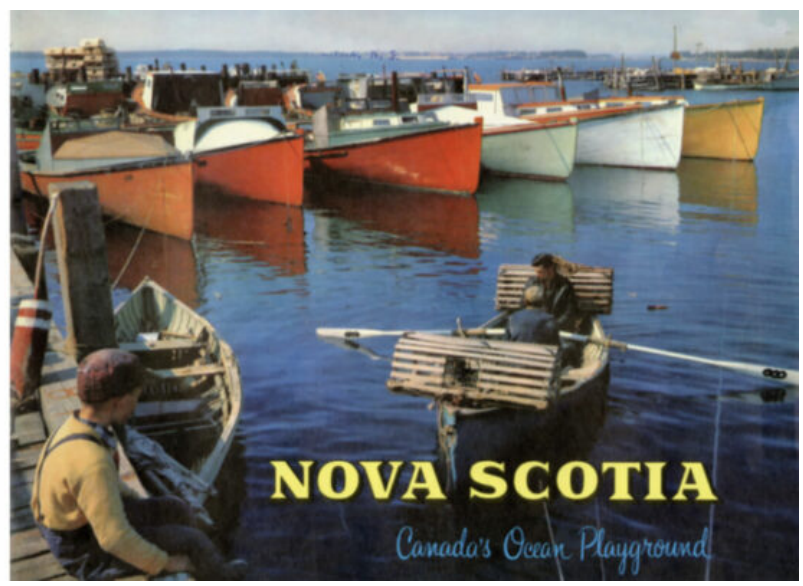
DEPICTING NOVA SCOTIA

Maud Lewis over the course of her long career developed a very particular vision of Nova Scotia, one that was nostalgic and optimistic. It was just what her customers wanted. By the 1950s she had stopped copying other sources, and, in a distinctive style, consistently depicted her region. The harbours reflect the tidal waters of the Bay of Fundy, with mud flats at low tide, and the distinctive high wharves needed to deal with the extreme height differences between high and low tides. The countryside she paints is her own, with the trees, flowers, and animals one would expect to see in Digby County. No longer do we see hoop-skirted women waiting for a train, as in *Train Coming into Station*, c.1949/50. Rather, in paintings such as *Oxen and Logging Wagon*, c.1960s, we see farmers and loggers in the familiar red woollen coats of rural Nova Scotia, and oxen with their distinctive Nova Scotia yokes. She does not show parts of the province she did not know herself: there are no scenes of Halifax, Cape Breton, or the villages and churches of the South Shore. These may have been destinations for many of Lewis's customers, but they were not part of her world. She painted the county she knew, as in *The Docks Pier, Bear River*, n.d.

Her artistic vision of Nova Scotia eventually helped change the way Nova Scotians saw their own province, becoming, as the licence plates proclaim today, "Canada's Ocean Playground," a phrase also seen in tourism brochures. As art historian Erin Morton has noted, "If the activities represented in Lewis's paintings, from travel in horse-drawn buggies to farm and fishing work, no longer organized everyday life in rural Nova Scotia in the 1960s and 1970s, they could at least help to visualize…a joyful representation of its past simplicity."[4] Lewis's vision of that "past simplicity" has become a central feature in how Nova Scotia still presents itself to the world—coastal scenes, like that in her painting *Lighthouse and Gulls*, n.d., continue to be popular.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Oxen and Logging Wagon*, c.1960s, oil on pulpboard, 26.0 x 35.8 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *The Docks Pier, Bear River*, n.d., oil on board, 60.3 x 90.2 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

In 2019, six contemporary Nova Scotian artists were grouped with Lewis in a three-city exhibition in China. The exhibition's title–*Maud Lewis and the Nova Scotia Terroir*–conveys the curator's thesis that Maud Lewis and the other artists in the exhibition were expressing something about the character of the province through their work.[5] As curator Sarah Fillmore wrote, "just as the terroir informs the taste of wine, the themes that came from this place inform and colour the works being produced here."[6]



LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Lighthouse and Gulls*, n.d., oil on board, 30.2 x 29.8 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Tourism booklet for Nova Scotia, 1960, Nova Scotia Archives Library.

TITLES, DATES, AND ATTRIBUTIONS

Maud Lewis sold her pictures unframed, and in the early years they were often unsigned. When she did sign them, she did so in varying ways: just "Lewis," "M. Lewis," "Maud. Lewis," and plain "Maud Lewis". One way she never signed her work was as Maude—despite the persistent trend to spell her name with that final "e."

Lewis rarely titled any of her paintings, nor did she date them. Any titles they have were usually applied afterwards by the owners of the paintings, by art dealers and auctioneers, and by curators who were exhibiting her work. Most are simply descriptive: *Three Black Cats*, *Digby Harbour*, *Oxen and Logging Wagon*, and so on. Over the years, paintings have been shown under different names, and it is only with the increased entrance of her work into public collections that titles are becoming fixed.

These two paintings show how similar Lewis's paintings of cats are. LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Three Black Cats*, 1955, oil on pulpboard, 30.5 x 30.7 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Three Black Cats*, n.d., oil on board, 30.2 x 30.2 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

The lack of such information on the works themselves, and Lewis's practice of making multiple copies of the same or of similar images, complicates the study of her work. Images such as those of the mother cat and kittens, for instance, can date from any period from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, and she made dozens of versions; the pair shown here illustrates the motifs she repeated regularly, such as the tulips and floral branches. If records were kept by the original purchaser that can help, but Lewis never kept such records herself.

Where it is possible to determine the dating of her work, at least in broad strokes, is in her use of materials. In the 1950s and early 1960s her work was mostly made with materials that were either scrounged by Everett, or readily available in Digby's hardware stores. That meant that her paints were often marine or house paints, for instance, even water-soluble poster paint. After the mid-1960s she began using artist's oil paint, often sent to her by fans in other provinces, such as Ontario painter John Kinnear (1920–2003). What she painted on changed as well, with the increased demands (and revenue) prompting Everett to buy pre-cut Masonite panels rather than gathering boards or using cardboard for Lewis to paint on. Collectors, curators, and art conservators such as Laurie Hamilton are able to reliably date works from different periods by examining the materials Lewis used. This method is still inexact, of course, in that it ascertains a range of years, even decades, rather than months, and it accounts for the vague dating on so many of Lewis's works.

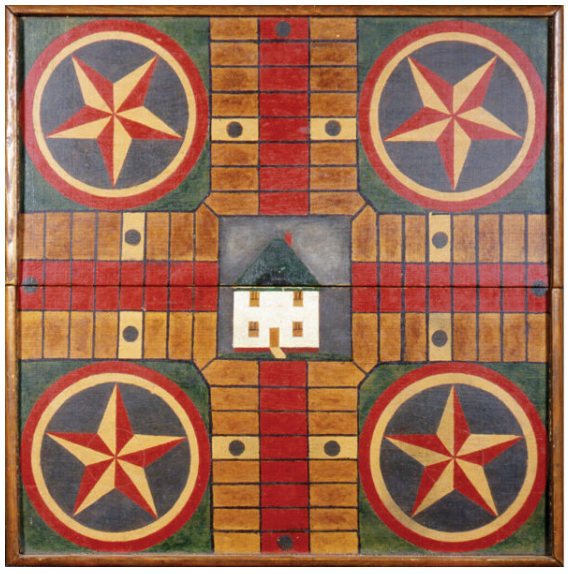
Maud Lewis, *Three Black Cats*, n.d., mixed media on beaver board, 30.5 x 35.6 cm, private collection.

FINDING FAME AND RISE OF FOLK ART

Maud Lewis, with her popular success in her lifetime, was the forerunner of an explosion in what became known as "Nova Scotia Folk Art." Folk art, or art made by untrained artists, is by no means confined to Nova Scotia, and traditionally it has meant decorative objects made by people for their own use. Folk art, for many decades, was usually found in history museums. Indeed, many art galleries, including the National Gallery of Canada, continue to exclude folk art from their collecting mandates. But beginning in the 1970s there developed in the province a burgeoning movement that was unique in that it shared with fine art the trappings of galleries, collectors, and touring exhibitions. Fuelled in no small part by the recognition won by Lewis as an artist, folk art from Nova Scotia began to be taken seriously as a fine art and found a new home in art galleries such as the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

MAUD LEWIS

Life & Work by Ray Cronin



LEFT: Mason Family Parcheesi Gameboard, c.1925, polychrome wood, 54.8 x 55.3 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Trotting Horse Weathervane, c.1920s, galvanized sheet metal with iron rivets, 130.0 x 81.8 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

There has been folk art in Nova Scotia since the arrival of colonists. Many of the few settler artists in Nova Scotia's early art history were non-professionals, as likely to paint houses or signs as they were portraits or landscapes, following the demands of the market. In a society where consumer goods were rare and expensive, many people simply made their own luxuries, items such as game boards, like the Mason Family Parcheesi Gameboard, c.1925, decorative ironwork, like the Trotting Horse Weathervane, c.1920s, and even children's toys and wallpaper. Early folk art in Nova Scotia, as in the rest of colonial Canada, was part of the day-to-day lives of its creators.

Lewis was among the first Canadian folk artists to emulate the art market of larger centres. Her paintings were produced not for herself, but for sale, making her distinctly different from the rug hookers who made floor coverings for their cold houses, or carvers who decorated the yokes that their oxen wore when plowing their fields. In Nova Scotia, before Lewis, collectors found folk art in the homes and barns of rural villages, and it was the act of collecting that turned a tool, a blanket, a weather vane, or some other utilitarian object into "art."

Lewis has often been compared to the American folk artist Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1860–1961), known as Grandma Moses. In fact, that comparison was made in the first article written about Lewis, in Toronto's *Star Weekly* in 1965. Both artists depicted nostalgic versions of their home regions and were influenced by popular prints by such makers as Currier and Ives. In another parallel, Lewis suffered all her life from debilitating arthritis, and it was Moses's inability to continue with her hobby of embroidery due to her own worsening arthritis that turned her to painting. Moses achieved much more fame in her lifetime, despite starting her painting career in her late seventies.

LEFT: Grandma Moses, *Out for Christmas Trees*, 1946, oil on pressed wood, 66.0 × 91.4 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Covered Bridge in Winter with Skaters*, mid 1960s, oil on pulpboard, 23 x 30.5 cm, private collection.

Though in interviews she resisted the designation of artist, Lewis was making objects that were obviously art: painted landscapes offered for sale. She changed the folk art dynamic by making objects whose only function was to please the eye—and unlike many of the Nova Scotia folk artists who followed her, she was never "discovered" by a collector or curator. She took her work to the market herself. Lewis, and later Nova Scotia folk artists such as Joe Norris (1924–1996), Collins Eisenhauer (1898–1979), and Ralph Boutilier (1906–1989), made work that was intended to be displayed, and the emerging style of Nova Scotia Folk Art was as gallery-dependent as any of the modernist art movements of the twentieth century.

With the surge in popularity of folk art, tied to the promotion of the tourism industry, Nova Scotia's most enduring artistic exports have become the products of the vernacular cultures of its regions, not the art produced in its major centre, Halifax. That city may be the economic engine of the province and the home of most of its artists, but it was the folk art produced in Lunenburg and Digby Counties that caught the general public's attention, not the Conceptual art coming out of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design from such stalwarts as Gerald Ferguson (1937–2009) and Garry Neill Kennedy (b.1935).

Despite her popularity, it took a while for Lewis's impact on Canadian folk art to be recognized by scholars and curators. One of the first books to document

LEFT: Ralph Boutilier, *Oriole whirligig*, n.d., 45.7 x 106.6 x 60.9 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Collins Eisenhauer, *Self-Portrait*, 1976, polychrome wood, rubber, and hair, 118.0 x 41.0 x 84.0 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Canadian vernacular art, J. Russell Harper's *A People's Art: Primitive, Naïve, Provincial, and Folk Painting in Canada* (1974), did not mention Lewis. It is common to find exhibitions and publications from the 1950s through the 1980s that also neglect the artist who has now become not only Canada's most famous folk artist, but also one of the country's best-known artists of any description.

Lewis died in 1970, and her work was never exhibited in public art galleries or museums in her lifetime. The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the institution most linked with Maud Lewis, was not even incorporated until 1975, despite having roots that stretch back to 1908. The first touring exhibition organized by the fledgling gallery was called *Folk Art of Nova Scotia*. It opened in 1976 and toured to several Canadian galleries, including the National Gallery of Canada. Four of Lewis's paintings were included in that exhibition (as were three of Everett Lewis's). She was not the star of that exhibition, however; that accolade went to woodcarver Collins Eisenhauer, a folk sculptor from Lunenburg County. Lewis was treated almost as a footnote to the show, whose catalogue and publicity materials highlighted the personalities of the (mostly) living artists who were included.

For many years there was little institutional interest in Lewis's work, except from the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. The Canadian Museum of History, then known as the National Museum of Man, actively collected Nova Scotia Folk Art in the 1970s. It has only a few paintings by Lewis in its collection. The National Gallery of Canada has none. In 1983 a nationally touring folk art exhibition was organized by the National Museum of Man, and while it included works by several Nova Scotia folk artists, Lewis was not among them. It was not until 1997 that she was the subject of a touring museum exhibition. However, in 2019 her work was the subject of a major solo exhibition at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Ontario, the gallery often thought of as a monument to the Group of Seven, and the location of the final resting place of six of the group's members. With the increasing interest and fame of Lewis's work, there has been a meteoric rise in the price of her paintings.

Installation view of *Maud Lewis*, exhibition at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, 2019.

THE HOUSE THAT MAUD BUILT: MAUD LEWIS AND THE ART GALLERY OF NOVA SCOTIA

The story of Maud Lewis's posthumous fame is intimately connected to the history of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, which owes much of its existence to the efforts to preserve and celebrate Lewis's legacy. From the first public exhibitions of her work through the marketing and promotion of her life and work as a brand, the gallery's cultural and economic position has been intimately tied to the story of Maud Lewis. That story has most often been told by the gallery's curators, most notably the founding curator and first director, Bernard (Bernie) Riordon, who curated the first touring show of Lewis's work in 1997.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia has been described as the house that Maud built. As with many such sayings, there is as much truth as untruth to it, and while there is undoubtedly much more going on at a public art museum of the scale of this institution, it is also true that Nova Scotia Folk Art, and Lewis in particular, have helped define the gallery over its history. The most important kernel of truth to the expression "the house that Maud built" is the role that Lewis and her painted house played in securing a permanent home for the gallery.

Installation view of Maud Lewis's Painted House in the Scotiabank Maud Lewis Gallery at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, 2007.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia began as the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts, a collecting society founded in Halifax in 1908. Lacking any building of its own, the museum mounted periodic exhibitions and collected works when it had the funds. In 1968 the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts opened the Centennial Gallery in a powder magazine in Halifax Citadel Hill National Historic Site. This exhibition space showed both the collection and temporary shows mounted by the Centennial Gallery's small staff, including its curator, Riordon. The museum operated this art gallery for ten years, until 1978, when the magazine was restored to its historical state.

In 1975 the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts became the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and moved into the former home of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. This space, however, was never large enough to serve the gallery's needs, and as it was owned by Dalhousie University it was always going to be a temporary home. Plans were put in motion for a permanent solution. Then, in 1984, the province—acting with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's full support and advice—acquired Lewis's painted house, and this served as a major spur of the proposal for a new home for the gallery on the Halifax waterfront.

LEFT: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Frontal view of Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d., Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

While there were many factors that combined to create a permanent place for the gallery after over seventy-five years of rootlessness, Lewis and her house played a decisive part. Ironically, the plan for a building on the waterfront holding the painted house was killed by the same political factors that had brought the project to the brink of success. The land went to a private developer, and an abandoned historic building across the street from the provincial legislature was given to the art gallery. The new Art Gallery of Nova Scotia opened to the public in 1988, but with no space for Lewis's house. It was not until 1997, with the opening of an expansion of the gallery, that it went on display in the Scotiabank Maud Lewis Gallery, along with a permanent exhibition of her work.

Lewis's significance as an artist is an ongoing creation. Her most iconic work, the house, exists only because of a long-term and extensive restoration effort. That hundreds of thousands of dollars and countless hours were spent saving the house of an artist who never received more than a few dollars for her work has struck many as ironic. But Lewis's fame grew so much after her death that the Nova Scotia public was unwilling to let her house disappear. From its earliest media exposure in the 1960s, the painted house was a major focus. That the house had remained in storage from 1984 only added to the pressure to preserve it. As one headline read just before the conservation efforts started in earnest, "Crumbling Home Is Where the Art Is."[7]

LEFT: The Painted House in disrepair, c.1981, photographer unknown. RIGHT: The interior of the Painted House before restoration, 1984, photographer unknown.

From the 1980s, successive provincial and federal governments had continued to fund restoration studies, and public and corporate support for finding a way to display the restored house to the public continued to grow. By 1996, with plans in place for an expanded Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, it was time to start restoring the house to its condition when the Lewises lived there. A grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Museums Assistance Program supplemented funds raised by the gallery and provided by the province. This permitted the gallery to hire a team of conservators and restorers, led by Senior Conservator Laurie Hamilton, to start in on the painstaking task of restoring the full beauty of the house.

From the outset, the push to preserve this distinctly Nova Scotian national treasure had been a collective effort, from local volunteers through to provincial and national institutions and corporations. With the work finally ready to be undertaken, that collective spirit was again in play. Space in Bedford's Sunnyside Mall was donated so that the conservation team would have room to work. The location also meant that much of the initial work could go on under the public eye.

The restored kitchen area of the Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

The conservation process for the house was extremely complex and proceeded in stages from stabilizing the actual structure through to restoring the painted surfaces and finding or replacing the furnishings and other items that had been in it during Maud's and Everett's lifetimes. For example, the gallery had been able to acquire the wooden storm door that had originally been one of its familiar painted elements. Apparently, a Digby area restaurant owner had approached Everett about displaying it as a form of advertising. The door ended up for sale in a Halifax art gallery and was purchased by the province for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. The intention was to reinstall it on the house, but the conservators found that the door had been cut down—trimmed at the top and bottom. Luckily, none of the painted elements had been affected, and the conservation team was able to add aged pine boards to the door, treated to blend with the original. With the dimensions restored, the team reattached the door to the house.

This mixture of detective work, science, and all-around problem solving was repeated over and over again as the house and its contents were worked on by the gallery's team of conservators.[8] The restored Painted House opened to the public in June 1998. It quickly became, and remains, one of the most popular exhibitions in the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and one of the main reasons people seek out the gallery from across the world. Since the house has been on display, the gallery has made a comment book available to visitors. Over the

decades thousands have shared their reactions to the house and the account of Lewis's life. Her art and story continue to resonate.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, Storm Door on the Painted House, n.d., Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Interior of Maud Lewis's Painted House after restoration, n.d., photographer unknown, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

OUR MAUD: A CANADIAN ICON

Maud Lewis's work, as well as her increasing posthumous fame, helped spark a new movement in Canadian art—Nova Scotia Folk Art—that continues to grow to this day, with its own galleries and avid collectors. Nova Scotia Folk Art has become a style in its own right, with an annual exhibition in Lunenburg, the Nova Scotia Folk Art Festival, that has been running since 1989. Lewis's enduring popularity has been reflected in an acclaimed feature film, *Maudie* (2016), a novel by award-winning Nova Scotian author Carol Bruneau (*Brighten the Corner Where You Are*, 2020), and a special series of holiday postage stamps issued by Canada Post in 2020.

Lewis and her painted house remain one of the pillars of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's exhibitions and programs, and perhaps nowhere more so than in its educational activities. Since 1997 Lewis's art, house, and story have played a central role in programs teaching Nova Scotia children about creativity and overcoming adversity. Laura Kenny's *AGNS's Employee of the Month*, 2018, is a

creative tongue-in-cheek reflection on Lewis's significance to the museum, which has even set up selfie stations featuring her paintings; several are installed along the Halifax waterfront.

LEFT: Cover of *Brighten the Corner Where You Are*, 2020, by Carol Bruneau. RIGHT: Poster for *Maudie*, 2016.

The contrast between Lewis's hopeful and happy paintings and the grinding poverty of her own life and the constant pain that she must have been in from her arthritis and other conditions is the defining element in any story of her life and art. Because Lewis left so little record of her own thoughts and opinions, there are as many versions of her story as there are tellers. The opinion of Lance Woolaver, whose biography *Maud Lewis: The Heart on the Door* (2016) is the most thorough treatment of her life, has evolved from seeing Lewis's work as an expression of her overcoming her circumstances and an example of stubborn optimism despite them, to also perceiving her as a victim of Everett's manipulation.[9] Art historian Erin Morton sees her as being used as a prop to fulfill a naive, tourism-centric view of Nova Scotia in her book *For Folk's Sake: Art and Economy in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (2016).[10] In contrast, Bruneau's fictional Lewis is fiercely independent and self-aware.[11]

In Lewis's lifetime there were suspicions that she was exploited by her husband, who kept all the money she earned. After her death, the way that her story was used to promote the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the province of Nova Scotia sparked other criticism. But simply seeing Lewis as a victim of exploitation is perhaps simplistic. After all, she painted for a market, not for herself (though her house, its interior at least, is an exception to that rule), and she had been doing so since she was a teenager. Painting had long been Lewis's way to contribute to the household income, whether she was living with her parents, with her aunt, or with her husband. Everett benefited from the proceeds of Lewis's paintings. But then, so did she benefit from Everett's work, and from his cooking and keeping house. Hero or victim, whatever interpretation we put on Maud Lewis and her work, it is bound to be subjective.

LEFT: Laura Kenney, *AGNS's Employee of the Month*, 2018, 33.02 x 50.8 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Selfie-station with Maud Lewis's painting *The Bluenose*, 2017, photograph by T.J. Maguire.

Just as there are actual shadows in Lewis's work, there were undoubtedly shadows in her life. That she was poor is irrefutable. She suffered terrible pain. But was she also happy? Based on her work, and on the memories of those who knew her, it is hard to argue the contrary. After all, Lewis was born in a time when people expected life to be hard, and she was always dependent on others for her food, shelter, and any comforts in life. Perhaps she had fewer expectations than most? In marrying Everett, however, she found a certain security. She took control of her life, finding the only kind of autonomy that most people in rural Nova Scotia at that time could imagine for a poor woman with no family (or societal) safety net.

Maud Lewis may have been a victim, but she was also a hero, and in overcoming adversity she transcended the starkness of her day-to-day life. In the end, it is to her paintings that we must look to examine her outlook—these, and her painted house, are the evidence she has left. Lewis's work continues to enchant, decades after her death, and her hopeful example of finding joy even in the shadows is her enduring legacy.

Maud Lewis, *Nova Scotia Harbour in Autumn*, n.d., oil on board, 22.5 x 30.5 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Maud Lewis's origins as a painter lie in her childhood home, and she only ever had one teacher, her mother, Agnes. She began to paint as a way to contribute to the household income, first with her parents and then with her husband. She never went to an art gallery or museum; her influences were commercial imagery from greeting cards, advertisements, tourism promotion, and mass-produced prints by such firms as Currier and Ives. Still, Lewis was more of a leader than a follower. Her work does not look like that of any other artist—but the work of many other folk artists certainly reflects her influence.

A STYLE OF HER OWN

It is the physical challenges that Maud Lewis met, and the way that she was able to create a personal artistic vision despite them, that has always been at the root of Lewis's enduring popularity and the public fascination with her life and work. She devised a unique and immediately recognizable style—*Untitled (Horses Ploughing)*, n.d., is a typical example of one of her bright rural scenes. She made paintings that, with their vivid colours and simple forms, convey joy and optimism to their viewers, and she did so while enduring, and overcoming, what for most of us would have been crippling challenges.

Maud Lewis, *Untitled (Horses Ploughing),* n.d., oil, 23 x 30.3 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Lewis's paintings are often described as being without shadows. This statement dates back to the *Star Weekly* feature about her, written by Murray Barnard, in which he says that Lewis's work "glows with a simplicity that is suited to the rural scene—no shades or shadows."[1] That theme was taken up in a completely straight manner by Diane Beaudry in her 1976 documentary for the National Film Board, *Maud Lewis: A World Without Shadows*. In the introduction to Beaudry's film Lewis's art is described as taking the viewer back to the world of childhood, one "without shadows."[2] Lance Woolaver, however, in his stage play *A World Without Shadows*, uses the same title in an ironic way, suggesting that as bright and happy as the paintings are, Lewis's life was certainly rife with shadow.

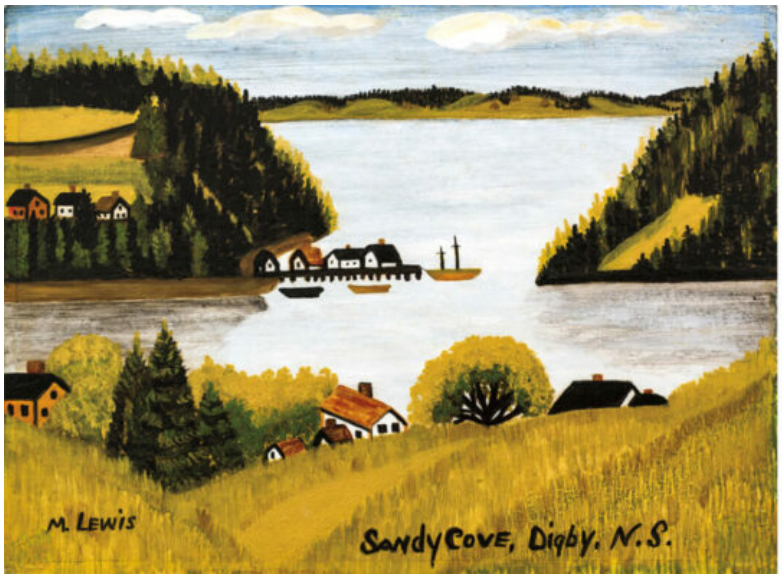
In looking at the works we see it is true that few have shadows painted in, though by no means are they completely absent. In her snow scenes, for instance, she often included blue shades that suggest shadows in the snow and give a sense of depth to the compositions, as can be seen in *Horse and Sleigh*, 1960s. In an untitled painting from the early 1960s of a fishing schooner tied up to a wharf at low tide, the shadow of the boat stretches across the mud flat, and in *Fish for Sale*, 1969/70, the small building casts a shadow in front of it.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Horse and Sleigh*, 1960s, oil on panel, 41.9 x 31.8 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Fish for Sale*, 1969/70, oil and marker on board, 29.3 x 39.4 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

Another Nova Scotia painter, Alex Colville (1920–2013), has a reputation for painting without shadow. His work is a polar opposite to that of Lewis, of course, solidly rooted in Western art history as it is, as opposed to vernacular folk art, but shadows play a part in his reputation as well. He rarely painted them: in a work such as *Ocean Limited*, 1962, the walking figure seems to almost float above the ground. Nonetheless, in Colville's painted world the shadow of chaos is always looming, just outside the picture plane. Colville served as a war artist in the Second World War and recorded both the day-to-day lives of soldiers and sailors, and the horrific results of war. He was present at the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, an experience that profoundly influenced his future art. Colville's day-to-day life was more comfortable and secure than Lewis's, but it is her painted world that remains innocent, unlike his more sombre one of experience.

NECESSITY DRIVING INVENTION

Perhaps the most telling influence on Maud Lewis was her arthritis and the way that it progressively attacked her physical abilities. Over her lifetime she lost most of the capacity to open her hands, and had little or no dexterity in her fingers. Her work changed as she aged because she was incapable of the finer details that she once had been able to approach, if not completely master. One need only compare an early painting such as *Sandy Cove*, late 1940s/early 1950s, to examples of her later work, such as *Scene Near Bear River*, 1960s, to see the difference in line quality and paint handling.



LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Sandy Cove*, late 1940s/early 1950s, oil on board, 30.5 x 22.9 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Scene Near Bear River*, 1960s, oil on board, 30.5 x 35.6 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

She started all of her paintings by drawing the outlines of the composition. Once the design was set, she worked with small brushes, propping her right hand on her left arm and laboriously filling in the outlines with colour. She used sardine tins and tobacco can lids to hold her paints, and she often worked directly from the can or, in later years, the tube. She would mix individual colours in their own tins, rather than using a palette. Her paintings can seem to be blocks of solid colours, but they actually display varying tones and shades, which she used to create a sense of space.

By the 1960s these outlines were often made with stencils, cut from cardboard by Everett to assist her as her arthritis progressed. Lewis's use of stencils, which sped up the process and allowed her to keep up with the demand for her work, was mirrored by the practice of another renowned Nova Scotia folk artist, Joe Sleep (1914–1978). His drawings, which featured cats, birds, fish, and other animals, were all produced using stencils for the central images, as can be seen in *Untitled* [Animals], n.d. The use of stencils was common in vernacular decorative art in Nova Scotia throughout the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century. Conceptual artist Gerald Ferguson (1937–2009), an early supporter of Sleep and one of the most important figures in the institutional and critical attention paid to Nova Scotia Folk Art from the 1970s, often worked with stencils in making folk-art-inspired paintings in the 1990s, a technique that is evident in *Still Life with Bowl, Fish, and Fruit*, 1989.

LEFT: Joe Sleep, *Untitled* [Animals], n.d., marker on paper, 48.2 x 76.2 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Gerald Ferguson, *Still Life with Bowl, Fish, and Fruit*, 1989, enamel, acrylic, conte on canvas, 68.5 x 83.8 cm, private collection.

PORTRAITS OF NATURE

Maud Lewis's painted world depicts people living closely with nature, with the flora and fauna that share their day-to-day lives. Animals often appear in her paintings as part of the overall composition, usually in her scenes of rural life: dogs gambol beside carriages or follow children as they play; horses pull carts, wagons, and carriages; cows stand quietly in the fields or wander onto the roads; chickens peck in the foreground of a picture; yoked oxen haul logs or wagons; and birds wheel in the sky above all this activity. The only woodland creatures that she depicted regularly were deer, often pairing a doe and fawn—as in *Fall Scene with Deer*, c.1950—who usually are looking out from the picture at the viewer. Animals are part and parcel of the world of Maud Lewis, and few of her pictures lack them.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Fall Scene with Deer*, c.1950, oil on pulpboard, 29.5 x 34.9 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Team of Oxen in Winter*, 1967, oil over graphite on pulpboard, 28.9 x 34.1 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

In her later paintings Lewis developed a style of presenting animals almost as portraits–frontal views, often of cats and oxen, sitting in shallow space and looking straight out of the picture at the viewer. Her oxen, in particular, are noteworthy for their long lashes and brightly decorated harnesses. As befits a harness maker's daughter, in works such as *Team of Oxen in Winter*, 1967, she shows the proper rigging and the Nova Scotia–style yoke—a head yoke that sits just behind the oxen's horns. Her cats, often a mother cat and a kitten or two, were among her most popular images. Long-haired and yellow-eyed, usually black, they are often depicted sitting against a bed of flowers.

When Lewis painted birds, it was usually in a more decorative manner, such as could be seen on wallpaper, or trims and borders on walls and furniture. This approach was more aligned with traditional folk art, which tended to embellish common household goods. A familiar theme for Lewis in her painted house and decorated objects, as well as in her stand-alone paintings, was the theme of

song birds flying amidst flowering branches or bunches of wildflowers. The compositions were usually overall floral patterns, again akin to wallpaper decoration, within which the birds were depicted perching. The compositions were flat, with nothing seen beyond the first layer of flowers or branches. Her paintings of birds in branches in bloom were not among her most popular compositions, but her love for them was apparent in how much they were used in her decoration of her house. She occasionally painted birds in other scenes, such as *British Kingfisher & Apple Blossoms*, 1963, a work inspired by an image on a Peek Freans biscuit tin.

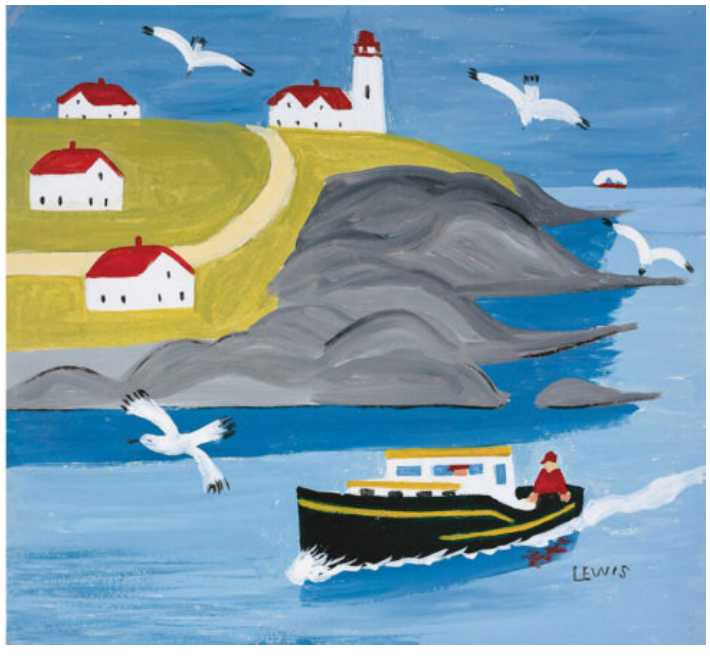
Maud Lewis, *British Kingfisher & Apple Blossoms*, 1963, oil on pulpboard, 23.0 x 30.2 cm, private collection.

That Lewis loved flowers is also apparent from her work. She painted them on several surfaces and objects in her house, and she included them in many of her paintings. She was even known to add flowers to plants that do not have them—a stand of spruce trees in blossom, for example, as in *Cows Grazing Among Flowering Spruce*, c.1965. Much as she used fall colours in snowy landscapes, she was not one to let the facts get in the way of a good story—or painting. Lewis painted sweet peas, which grew around the house (and sprigs of which Everett would present to customers in season), roses, apple blossoms, and, most famously, tulips. That the world of her art was so often in full bloom is one of the enduring pleasures of Lewis's work—and certainly a large part of the tone of hope and happiness that so many viewers find there.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Vase with Flowers*, 1965, oil on board, 29.2 x 19.1 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Cows Grazing Among Flowering Spruce*, c.1965, oil on Masonite, 29.8 x 41 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.

AT WORK AND PLAY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Maud Lewis depicted many aspects of day-to-day life in rural Nova Scotia in her paintings. In her images we see farmers working the fields, plowing, sowing, and harvesting. Heavily loaded wagons of logs show the results of the lumber industry. Trees are tapped for maple syrup, a blacksmith works at his forge, and a fisher repairs his nets. But life is not all work—in Lewis's scenes of Nova Scotia we see sleighing parties, Sunday drives in the countryside in carriages and antique motor cars, skiing, fishing, and sailing.



LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Maple Syrup Gathering*, 1960s, oil on board, 28.6 x 33.3 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *Eddie Barnes & Ed Murphy Going Fishing*, 1965, oil on pulpboard, 32 x 36 cm, private collection.

What we do not see is life in the towns or cities, views of the shops on the main street of Yarmouth, or the busy and crowded wharves at Digby. Instead, we view small villages, single farms, and quiet coves with one or two fishing boats tied up at the pier. It is a romantic view, a "peaceable kingdom" that we experience

in Lewis's paintings, one free from toil, where work is balanced by play, and where no one wants for anything. The opposite, then, of her actual experience of daily life.

Few recognizable places populate her paintings, making the ones that are identifiable stand out all the more. The Digby and Annapolis Railroad makes an occasional appearance, as well as landmarks such as the Yarmouth lighthouse. Even Nova Scotia's sailing ambassador, the *Bluenose II*, appears in one painting, although it was a commission. Lewis often depicted Cape Islander fishing boats, as well as boats and ships from the age of sail, but she rarely specified them by their actual names.

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Lighthouse and Ferry at Cape Forchu, Yarmouth County*, 1960s, oil on board, 31.4 x 33.7 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. RIGHT: View of Cape Forchu Lighthouse before De-Staffing in 1993, n.d., photograph by Chris Mills.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The materials that any artist uses to make his or her work depend on numerous factors, most importantly on access. It is a general rule of thumb that artists will use the best materials that they can afford, and the range of quality in those materials can vary considerably over the course of their careers. Early Cubist paintings, for example, the works of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and Georges Braque (1882–1963), with their muddy brown palettes, have often been attributed as much to poverty—earth-tone oil paints were cheaper than bright colours—as they have to aesthetic decisions.

Maud Lewis was no stranger to poverty, and she used different materials for her paintings at various times. Early on, she frequently used whatever paints Everett could find for her, most often oil-based boat and house paint. Her brushes were usually of poor quality, purchased at local hardware stores, and their bristles are often found embedded in the surfaces of her paintings.

Installation view of Maud Lewis's *Horses Hauling* on display in the Painted House, n.d., Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

She worked on boards, cut by Everett, and she kept her panels small, both for ease of handling them more readily with her restricted mobility and for ease of sale. She made a few larger paintings as special requests, but none were much larger than two by three feet. In an article in the magazine the *Atlantic Advocate* from 1967, Doris McCoy writes:

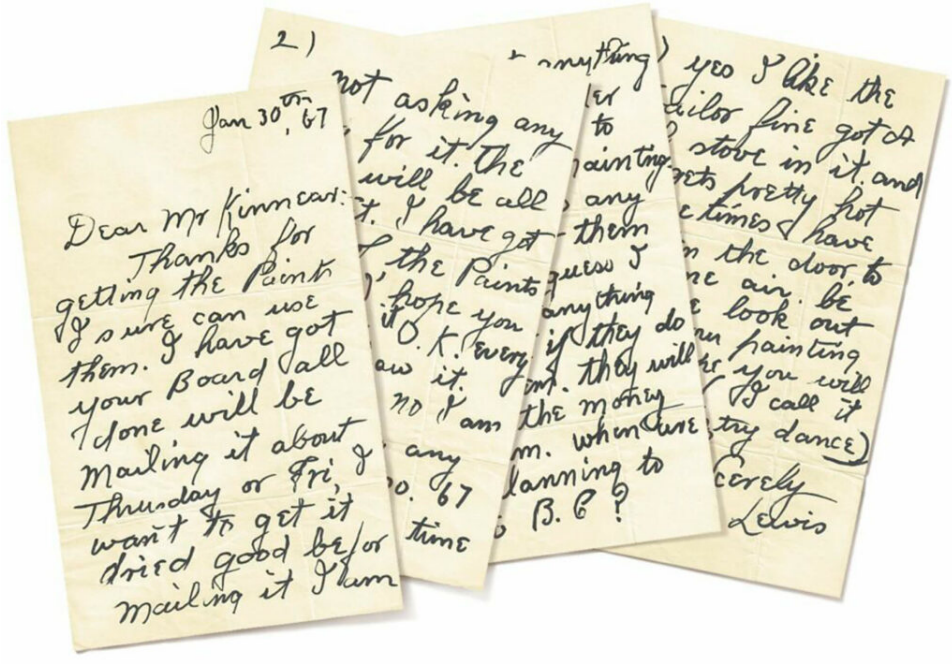
> Her husband patiently buys her tubes of paint from the local hardware store, and saws the one eighth inch hardboard pieces which she uses for her canvases. The size of the boards must be within a nine by twelve-inch range because of her disability. However, Mr. Lewis saws as fancy strikes him and doesn't trouble to make the pieces a standard size, which causes not a few headaches for the art dealer when it comes time to frame the pictures.[3]

Over the years Everett was able to find artist's paints and materials, sometimes from tourists who left them behind. Lewis also developed a group of patrons and supporters who would help her with materials.

After the CBC television program about Lewis aired in 1965 and the publication of the Toronto *Star Weekly* story on her that same year, more people reached out to assist her. One was the London, Ontario-based painter John Kinnear (1920–2003). As his daughter recounted in an article for *Canadian Art* magazine, her father was struck by this story of disability, poverty, and perseverance:

> As a former prisoner of war in World War II, he knew too well of pain and hardship, and he decided to help her. In the autumn of 1965, he mailed her a box of archival paints, sable brushes and standard Masonite boards, which I had primed. It was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Lewis's death in 1970.[4]

Her early supporters and art dealers, Claire Stenning and Bill Ferguson, also provided materials, as did patrons such as Judge Philip Woolaver, one of her most dedicated early collectors.



Letter from Maud Lewis to John Kinnear, 1967.

After her death in 1970, there was much discussion about fake Lewis paintings that were periodically appearing in local auctions and being offered to art galleries.[5] One of the claims put forward to ascribe authenticity to works was that Lewis painted on beaver board, a wood fibre composite, not Masonite, and thus any painting on Masonite could reliably be considered a fake. However, Kinnear had introduced Lewis to Masonite in 1965. And as Ralph McIntyre recalled in a letter to the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* in 1989:

> For about 15 years I operated a woodworking and building supply outlet near Digby and supplied her with Masonite some of that time. Mrs. Lewis, a friend as well as a customer, did use a green backed board called beaver board. This became scarce and I suggested to her that one-eighth inch Masonite would make a better product as it was a more stable board and it would not warp or twist.[6]

LEFT: Maud Lewis, *Erie Train*, c.1949/50, oil on beaver board, 30 x 31 cm, Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley.
RIGHT: Maud Lewis, *White Cat*, 1965/1966, oil on beaver board, 27.9 × 33 cm, private collection.

McIntyre also explained why, in Lewis's later years, the sizes of her paintings became more consistent—at his shop they would cut the four-by-eight-foot sheets of Masonite into uniform panels—as he remembered, 9 x 16 inches to make eighteen pieces per sheet.

Ultimately, Maud Lewis developed a unique style that is instantly recognizable. Unaware of work by other artists, she developed a visual vocabulary and a way of working that, while influenced by graphic art, is wholly her own. Her works are simple, but that simplicity is hard-won—as the great modernist sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957) said, "Simplicity is not an end in art, but we arrive at simplicity in spite of ourselves as we approach the real sense of things."[7] Lewis's approach was the result of her own decisions about the images she wanted to paint. She repeated many images and themes, certainly, but that takes nothing away from the achievement that the development of her style and content represent. From her little house by the side of the road, self-taught and physically isolated, mostly ignored by the larger art world, patronized when she was not, she nonetheless achieved what very few artists ever do, the creation of an authentic, consistent, and individual style. In doing so, she created a series of iconic works, and sparked a new artistic genre: Nova Scotia Folk Art.

Maud Lewis, *Untitled (Digby Ferry Passing Point Prim Lighthouse)*, 1950s, oil on board, 30 x 30.7 cm, private collection, Nova Scotia.

WHERE TO SEE

The works of Maud Lewis are held in public and private collections in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view. This list contains only the works in public collections discussed and illustrated in this book.

ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA

1040 Moss Street
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
1-250-384-4171
aggv.ca

Maud Lewis, *Untitled (Horses Ploughing)*, n. d.
Oil
23 x 30.3 cm

ART GALLERY OF NOVA SCOTIA

1723 Hollis Street,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
1-902-424-5280
artgalleryofnovascotia.ca

Maud Lewis, *Child Feeding Squirrels*, c.1940s
Oil on pulpboard
29.7 x 29.3 cm

Maud Lewis, *Deer in Winter*, c.1950
Oil on pulpboard
29.6 x 35.9 cm

Maud Lewis, *Fall Scene with Deer*, c.1950
Oil on pulpboard
29.5 x 34.9 cm

Maud Lewis, *White Cat [2]*, 1960s
Oil on pulpboard
31.1 x 33.8 cm

Maud Lewis, *Oxen and Logging Wagon*, c.1960s
Oil on pulpboard
26.0 x 35.8 cm

Maud Lewis, *Painted Cookie Tin with Flowers*, c.1960s
Oil on metal
21.0 x 15.8 x 15.8 cm

Maud Lewis, *Painted Yellow Breadbox with Two Doors*, c.1960s
Oil on metal
36.9 x 38.0 x 35.5 cm

Maud Lewis, *Winter Sleigh Ride*, c.1960s
Oil on pulpboard
33.0 x 35.5 cm

Maud Lewis, *Children Skiing*, mid 1960s
Oil on pulpboard
31.8 x 35.0 cm

Maud Lewis, *Team of Oxen in Winter*, 1967
Oil over graphite on pulpboard
28.9 x 34.1 cm

Maud Lewis, Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d.
Mixed media,
4.1 x 3.8 m

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY

100 Laurier Street,
Gatineau, Quebec, Canada
1-819-776-7000
historymuseum.ca

Maud Lewis, *The Skaters*, n.d.
Watercolour on card
10.8 x 15.9 cm

NOTES

BIOGRAPHY

1. When Maud Lewis signed her work, she did so in varying ways: just "Lewis," "M. Lewis," "Maud. Lewis," and plain "Maud Lewis". One way she never signed her work was as Maude—despite the persistent trend to spell her name with that final "e."

2. CBC Archives, "The Once-Upon-a-Time-World of Maude Lewis," *Telescope*, DVD.

3. Lance Woolaver, *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1996), 8.

4. Lance Woolaver, quoted in Elissa Barnard, "Review of *Maud Lewis: The Heart on the Door*," *Local Xpress* (Halifax), April 2, 2017, http://www.lancewoolaver.ca/review-of-maud-lewis-the-heart-on-the-door-by-elissa-barnard-local-xpress/.

5. Little is known conclusively about this period in Lewis's life: for more of Lance Woolaver's research see *Maud Lewis: The Heart on the Door* (Halifax: Spenser Books, 2016).

6. "Digby's Artist, Mrs. Maude Lewis Dies," *Halifax Chronicle*, July 1970.

7. Woolaver, *The Heart on the Door*, 244.

8. CBC Archives, "Once-Upon-a-Time-World."

9. Murray Barnard, "The Little Old Lady Who Paints Pretty Pictures," *Star Weekly* (Toronto), July 10, 1965.

10. CBC Archives, "Once-Upon-a-Time-World."

11. CBC Archives, "Once-Upon-a-Time-World."

12. CBC Archives, "Once-Upon-a-Time-World."

13. Barnard, "The Little Old Lady."

14. CBC Archives, "Once-Upon-a-Time-World."

15. Woolaver, *The Heart on the Door*, 441.

16. "Digby's Artist, Maude Lewis, Laid to Rest," *Digby Courier*, August 6, 1970, 1.

17. "Digby's Artist, Mrs. Maude Lewis Dies," *Halifax Chronicle*, undated (from the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia artist files).

18. "Digby's Artist, Mrs. Maude Lewis Dies."

19. CBC Archives, "Once-Upon-a-Time-World."

KEY WORKS: FLOWERS WITH CANDLE LANTERN

1. Lance Woolaver, *The Heart on the Door* (Halifax: Spenser Books, 2016), 172.

KEY WORKS: DEER IN WINTER

1. As in Diane Beaudry, dir., *Maud Lewis: World Without Shadows* (Ottawa: National Film Board, 1976) and Lance Woolaver, *A World Without Shadows: The Original Play* (Halifax: Spenser Books, 2016).

KEY WORKS: THREE BLACK CATS

1. Lance Woolaver, *The Heart on the Door* (Halifax: Spenser Books, 2016), 44.

2. Harold Pearse, "The Serial Imagery of Maud Lewis," *Arts Atlantic* 58 (Summer 1997): 26.

KEY WORKS: MODEL T FORD

1. Lance Woolaver, *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2006), 66.

KEY WORKS: ROADSTER AND COW

1. Jeffrey Spalding, undated label text, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Maud Lewis artist file.

2. Lance Woolaver, *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2006), 38.

KEY WORKS: YELLOW BIRDS

1. Lance Woolaver, *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2006), 37.

KEY WORKS: WINTER SLEIGH RIDE

1. Harold Pearse, "The Serial Imagery of Maud Lewis," *Arts Atlantic* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 29.

2. Pearse, "Serial Imagery," 29.

KEY WORKS: PAINTED COOKIE TIN WITH FLOWERS

1. Richard Henning Field, *Spirit of Nova Scotia: Traditional Decorative Folk Art, 1780–1930* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1985), 2.

KEY WORKS: MAUD LEWIS'S PAINTED HOUSE

1. Lance Woolaver, *The Heart on the Door* (Halifax: Spenser Books, 2016), 362.

2. In Digby County there has always been a certain amount of confusion about the spelling of Maud's first name, with or without the final e. Maud herself did not sign any of her paintings with the e in her name, and her gravestone simply reads "Maud Dowley." Near the site of her house, however, can be found "Maude Lewis Lane."

SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. CBC Radio and Television, "The Once-Upon-a-Time-World of Maude Lewis," *Telescope*, DVD.

2. Ray Cronin, *Mary Pratt: Life & Work* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2020).

3. Doris McCoy, "Frail Woman with a Bold Brush," *Atlantic Advocate*, January 1967, 39.

4. Erin Morton, "Ordinary Affects: Maud Lewis and the Social Aesthetics of the Everyday," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 100.

5. The other artists in the exhibition were Melanie Colisimo, Frances Dorsey, Ursula Johnson, Anne Macmillan, Sarah Maloney, and Charley Young.

6. Sarah Fillmore, "Maud Lewis and the Nova Scotia Terroir," *Maud Lewis and the Nova Scotia Terroir* (Shenzen: He Xiangning Art Museum, 2019), 7.

7. Kevin Cox, "Crumbling Home Is Where the Art Is," *Globe and Mail*, July 6, 1996, A1/A4.

8. The entire process is meticulously detailed in Laurie Hamilton's book, *The Painted House of Maud Lewis: Conserving a Folk Art Treasure* (Fredericton: Goose Lane, 2001).

9. See Lance Woolaver, *Maud Lewis: The Heart on the Door* (Halifax: Spenser Books, 2016).

10. Erin Morton, *For Folk's Sake: Art and Economy in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016).

11. Carol Bruneau, *Brighten the Corner Where You Are* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2020).

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. Murray Barnard, "The Little Old Lady Who Paints Pretty Pictures," *Star Weekly* (Toronto), July 10, 1965, 14.

2. Diane Beaudry, dir., *Maud Lewis: A World Without Shadows* (Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, 1976), DVD.

3. Doris McCoy, "The Frail Woman with a Bold Brush," *Atlantic Advocate*, January 1967, 39.

4. Sheila M. Kinnear, "My Work for Maud Lewis," *Canadian Art*, August 15, 2017, https://canadianart.ca/features/maud-lewis/.

5. For instance, see Greg Guy, "Art Dealers Aid in Hunt for Forgers," *Mail Star* (Halifax), April 28, 1989.

6. Ralph McIntyre, "Voice of the People," *Chronicle Herald* (Halifax), May 12, 1989, 7.

7. Quoted in Sidney Geist, *Brancusi: A Study of the Sculpture* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1983), 145.

GLOSSARY

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
One of the largest museums in Atlantic Canada, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia was founded in 1908. Its collection includes more than 17,000 works, with a focus on work by artists with strong connections to Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada as well as work by historical and contemporary Canadian artists more generally. Its collection of folk art, anchored by the work of Maud Lewis, is especially notable.

Boutilier, Ralph (Canadian, 1906–1989)
One of Nova Scotia's leading folk artists, Ralph Boutilier established his reputation as a landscape painter before venturing into carving in the 1960s. Based in Milton, Nova Scotia, Boutilier is best known for his large wood and metal whirligigs modelled after various species of birds, although he also carved human figures. His work is found in the collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Brancusi, Constantin (Romanian, 1876–1957)
An abstract sculptor, with a unique focus on expressing natural forms as simply as possible, Constantin Brancusi influenced later sculptors, including Amedeo Modigliani and Carl Andre. Active for most of his life in Paris, Brancusi became known in America following his inclusion in the Armory Show, the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art.

Braque, Georges (French, 1882–1963)
A seminal figure in the history of modern art. Working alongside Picasso from 1908 to 1914, Braque developed the principles of major phases of Analytic and Synthetic Cubism and, along with the latter, the use of collage. After the First World War he pursued a personal style of Cubism admired for its compositional and colouristic subtleties.

Cahén, Oscar (Danish/Canadian, 1916–1956)
Born in Copenhagen, Cahén attended the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts and taught design, illustration, and painting at Prague's Rotter School of Graphic Arts before his family's anti-Nazi activities forced him to flee to England. He was deported to Canada as an enemy alien and settled in Montreal before moving to Toronto in 1943; he was one of the founders of Painters Eleven in 1953. (See *Oscar Cahén: Life & Work* by Jaleen Grove.)

Canadian Museum of History
Located in Ottawa, the museum was originally founded in 1856 as a geological museum associated with the Geological Survey of Canada. Its mission later expanded to include ethnography, archaeology, and natural history. In 1968 it was split into three parts, with the ethnographic section becoming the National Museum of Man. Renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1986, in 1989 it moved to its current building, designed by Douglas Cardinal to reflect the Canadian landscape. Its most recent change of name, in 2010, to the Canadian Museum of History, reflects its current focus on the history and culture of Canada's peoples.

Carmichael, Franklin (Canadian, 1890–1945)
An original member of the Group of Seven, Carmichael created landscapes in watercolour as well as in oil. He was a founding member of the Canadian Group of Painters and the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour. Like so many of his colleagues, he earned his living primarily as a commercial artist and, in 1932, he became head of the Graphic Design and Commercial Art Department at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University), Toronto.

Colville, Alex (Canadian, 1920–2013)
A painter, muralist, draftsman, and engraver whose highly representational images verge on the surreal. Colville's paintings typically depict everyday scenes of rural Canadian life imbued with an uneasy quality. Since his process was meticulous—the paint applied dot by dot—he produced only three or four paintings or serigraphs per year. (See *Alex Colville: Life & Work* by Ray Cronin.)

Conceptual art
Traced to the work of Marcel Duchamp but not codified until the 1960s, "Conceptual art" is a general term for art that emphasizes ideas over form. The finished product may even be physically transient, as with land art or performance art.

Cubism
A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, Cubism is defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.

Eisenhauer, Collins (Canadian, 1898–1979)
Regarded as a great master of folk art, Collins Eisenhauer is best known for his carvings of birds, animals, and people. He was born in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, and embarked on his artistic practice after retiring in 1964, although it was not until the early 1970s that Eisenhauer's work began to receive public attention. His works are found in the collections of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the Canadian Museum of History.

Ferguson, Gerald (American/Canadian, 1937–2009)
Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Gerald Ferguson was a Conceptual artist and painter who taught at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) from 1968 to 2003. Using everyday materials, he produced large-scale and often monochromatic canvases that explore the notion of authorship and the construction of meaning in painting. Ferguson played a key role in establishing NSCAD as a centre for Conceptual art.

Group of Seven
A progressive and nationalistic school of landscape painting in Canada, the Group of Seven was active between 1920 (the year of the group's first exhibition, at the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the Art Gallery of Ontario) and 1933. Founding members were the artists Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley.

Hahn, Emanuel (German/Canadian, 1881–1957)
A sculptor and commercial designer who designed the Ned Hanlan monument (commissioned in 1926 and originally erected on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition; now located on Toronto Islands, Toronto). He was the head of the sculpture department at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University), Toronto, and the husband of fellow sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood.

Johnston, Frank H. (Canadian, 1888–1949)
A founding member of the Group of Seven. In 1921, he became principal of the Winnipeg School of Art and later taught at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University), Toronto. He formally severed his ties with the group in 1924, preferring to paint in a realistic style less controversial at the time than his earlier decorative work.

Lismer, Arthur (British/Canadian, 1885–1969)
A landscape painter and founding member of the Group of Seven, Lismer immigrated to Canada from England in 1911. He was also an influential educator of adults and children, and he created children's art schools at both the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto (1933) and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1946).

MacDonald, J.E.H. (British/Canadian, 1873–1932)
A painter, printmaker, calligrapher, teacher, poet, and designer, and a founding member of the Group of Seven. His sensitive treatment of the Canadian landscape was influenced by Walt Whitman's poetry and Henry David Thoreau's views on nature.

Moses, Anna Mary Robertson (American, 1860–1961)
Nicknamed "Grandma Moses" by a reporter in New York's *Herald Tribune*, Anna Mary Robertson Moses began painting charming scenes of country life at the age of seventy-eight. By the time she died at 101, she had produced over fifteen hundred works. Raised on a farm in upstate New York, Moses moved to Virginia after marrying in 1887. The folk artist drew inspiration from her childhood memories of rural New York and Virginia.

National Gallery of Canada
Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the governor general, the Marquis of Lorne, the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988 the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

Norris, Joe (Canadian, 1924–1996)
Joe Norris was a prominent folk painter based in the small hamlet of Lower Prospect, Nova Scotia. He worked in the fishing and construction industries until a heart attack in 1972 prompted him to retire, after which he began painting. Norris's work is recognized for its strong compositional designs and vibrant colour palette. His work is found in the collections of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, National Gallery of Canada, and Canadian Museum of History.

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
Founded in 1887, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (now NSCAD University) is among the leading art schools in Canada. Initially dedicated to traditional landscape painting, the institution developed a more progressive curriculum after Group of Seven member Arthur Lismer served as its president (1916–19). Assuming this role in the 1967, Garry Neill Kennedy spearheaded NSCAD's transformation into a world-renowned centre for Conceptual art in the 1970s.

Painters Eleven
An artists' group active from 1953 to 1960, formed by eleven Abstract Expressionist Toronto-area painters, including Harold Town, Jack Bush, and William Ronald. They joined together in an effort to increase their exposure, given the limited interest in abstract art in Ontario at the time.

Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)
One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1906–7, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

Pratt, Mary (Canadian, 1935–2018)
One of Canada's most prominent artists, whose use of light in particular transforms quotidian objects and moments into deeply meaningful subjects. Pratt's style developed in response to the demands on her time as the mother of four children; unable to paint scenes that struck her in the moment, she began recording them with a camera for later use. (See *Mary Pratt: Life & Work* by Ray Cronin.)

Sleep, Joe (Canadian, 1914–1978)
Previously employed as a lobster fisherman and then by the travelling circus Bill Lynch Shows, Halifax-based folk artist Joe Sleep began drawing in 1973 while hospitalized for a heart attack at the Halifax Infirmary. His art encompassed a wide range of media, including felt markers, pen, pencil, ballpoint, and spray paint. Sleep was the subject of a retrospective at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in 1981.

Spalding, Jeffrey (Canadian, 1951–2019)
An artist, curator, educator, and museum director. Spalding is an important figure in contemporary Canadian art, whose multimedia artistic practice and broad activities within the national art scene influenced the direction and reception of Conceptual art, video art, and painting. He received the Order of Canada in 2007.

Varley, F.H. (Frederick Horsman) (British/Canadian, 1881–1969)
A founding member of the Group of Seven, known for his contributions to Canadian portraiture as well as landscape painting. Originally from Sheffield, England, Varley moved to Toronto in 1912 at the encouragement of his friend Arthur Lismer. From 1926 to 1936 he taught at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, now known as Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

SOURCES & RESOURCES

Maud Lewis never had a public exhibition in her lifetime, and the only words we have from her directly are from two press interviews, a radio program, and a television program. Nonetheless, in the decades since her death there have been numerous articles, books, plays, films, and websites created about her and her work. Exhibitions of her paintings have been mounted across the country and the world, in both group and solo exhibitions. Her work is held in most major Canadian art gallery collections and is regularly featured in auctions of important Canadian art.

LEFT: Installation view of *Maud Lewis* exhibition at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, 2019. RIGHT: Installation detail of the exhibition *Maud Lewis: As Collected by John Risley*, at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, June 24 to September 17, 2017.

MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

1976	*Folk Art of Nova Scotia*. Nationally touring exhibition of twenty-one Nova Scotia folk artists, organized by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
1989	*Nova Scotia Folk Art: Canada's Cultural Heritage*. Touring exhibition to six venues in the United Kingdom, organized by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
1997	*The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis*. Nationally touring solo exhibition, organized by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
1998	The Scotiabank Maud Lewis Gallery at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia opens with a permanent installation of Maud Lewis's work, featuring the restored Painted House.
2019	*Maud Lewis*. Nationally touring solo exhibition organized by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.
2019	*Maud Lewis and the Nova Scotia Terroir*. Exhibition of the work of Maud Lewis and six contemporary Nova Scotia artists in Wuhan and Guangzhou, People's Republic of China.

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LEFT: Cover of *Our Maud: The Life, Art and Legacy of Maud Lewis* by Ray Cronin, 2017.
RIGHT: Cover of *Maud Lewis: Paintings for Sale* by Sarah Milroy, 2019.

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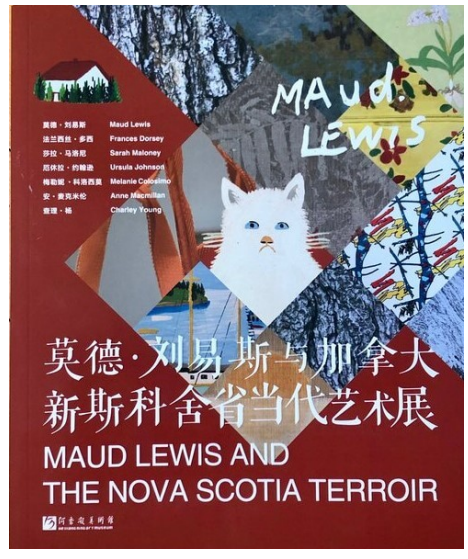

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LEFT: Cover of *The Painted House of Maud Lewis: Conserving a Folk Art Treasure* by Laurie Hamilton, 2001. RIGHT: Cover of *For Folk's Sake: Art and Economy in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* by Erin Morton, 2016.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RAY CRONIN

Ray Cronin is an author and curator who lives in Nova Scotia. He is a graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (Bachelor of Fine Arts) and the University of Windsor (Master of Fine Arts). Raised in New Brunswick, Cronin returned to Fredericton in 1993 where he worked in literary publishing, eventually becoming a full-time writer, including as arts columnist for the *Daily Gleaner* (Fredericton) and *Here* (Saint John), as well as being an artist and freelance curator. In 2001 he moved to Halifax as Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and eventually Senior Curator. From 2007 to 2015, he was Director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

He is the founding curator of the Sobey Art Award, Canada's premiere award for the visual arts, and the author of numerous articles and reviews for Canadian and American art magazines, including *Canadian Art*, *Border Crossings*, *Sculpture*, and *Espace art actuel*. Cronin is editor-in-chief of *Billie: Visual · Culture · Atlantic*.

He has curated numerous exhibitions, including the nationally touring *Arena: The Art of Hockey*; *Nancy Edell: Selected Works 1980–2004*; *Thierry Delva*; and *Graeme Patterson: Woodrow*. He recently curated the 2021 Windsor-Essex Triennial of Contemporary Art.

His e-books *Alex Colville: Life & Work* and *Mary Pratt: Life & Work* were published by the Art Canada Institute in 2017 and 2020. He is the author of seven other books of non-fiction, including *Our Maud: The Life, Art and Legacy of Maud Lewis*; *Alex Colville: A Rebellious Mind*; *Mary Pratt: Still Light*; and *Gerald Ferguson: Thinking of Painting*. He has contributed essays to over thirty books and catalogues on artists including Walter Ostrom, John Greer, David Askevold, Graeme Patterson, Colleen Wolstenholme, Ned Pratt, and Garry Neill Kennedy. In 2022, Nimbus Publishing will publish his book *Nova Scotia Folk Art: An Illustrated Guide*.

"By overcoming pain and isolation to create a cheerful world of nostalgic optimism, Maud Lewis has inspired generations. The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia has preserved Maud Lewis's legacy since the gallery's inception, a trust that I took my turn upholding over my tenure as a curator and as Director. I remain committed to celebrating an artist who embodies so much of what makes Nova Scotia unique."

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From the Author
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From the ACI

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The ACI is honoured to be presenting this book with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia as a cultural partner, and particularly wishes to thank Shannon Parker for her work on this publication. *Maud Lewis: Life & Work* is an adaptation of *Our Maud: The Life, Art and Legacy of Maud Lewis*, written by Ray Cronin and published by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in 2017.

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The ACI also recognizes the additional private collectors who have given permission for their works to be published in this edition.

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Maud Lewis, *Three Black Cats*, n.d. (See below for details.)

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Biography: Maud Lewis in front of her home holding one of her paintings, 1965, photograph by Bob Brooks. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.
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Key Works: Maud Lewis, *Yellow Birds*, c.1960s. (See below for details.)

Significance & Critical Issues: Maud Lewis, *The Bluenose*, c.1960s. (See below for details.)

Style & Technique: Maud Lewis, *Lighthouse and Lobster Trap*, n.d. Private collection. Courtesy of Hodgins Art Auctions Ltd., Calgary.

Sources & Resources: Maud Lewis, *Paintings for Sale*, 1960s. (See below for details.)

Where to See: Installation view of the exhibition *Maud Lewis: As Collected by John Risley*, June 24 to September 17, 2017, at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

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Black Cat Scallop Shell, n.d. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Blacksmith's Shop, 1960s. Collection of Dr. Doug and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Bluenose, c.1960s. Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

British Kingfisher & Apple Blossoms, 1963. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Buggy Ride, 1940s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Carriage and Dog, n.d. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Child Feeding Squirrels, c.1940s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Bessie Dalrymple, Stewiacke, Nova Scotia, 1999. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Children Skiing, mid 1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Dr. Peter Moore, Toronto, Ontario, 1994. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Children Waving at a Train, c.1950s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Covered Bridge in Winter with Skaters, mid 1960s. Private collection. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Cows Grazing Among Flowering Spruce, c.1965. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

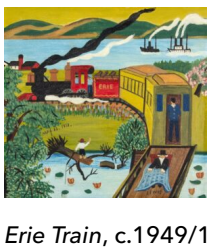
Deer Crossing Stream, 1960s. Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Deer in Winter, c.1950. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1974. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

The Docks Pier, Bear River, n.d. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Drying Cod Flakes, mid/late 1950s. Private collection. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Eddie Barnes & Ed Murphy Going Fishing, 1965. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.



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Fall Scene with Deer, c.1950. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1974. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Feeding the Horses, n.d. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Fish for Sale, 1969/70. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Fishing Schooner in the Bay of Fundy, n.d. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

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Greetings, c.1945. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Haywagon, 1940s. Private collection. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Horse and Sleigh, 1960s. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

House and Ox Cart by the River, 1960s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Lighthouse and Ferry at Cape Forchu, Yarmouth County, 1960s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

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Maple Syrup Gathering, 1960s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Matchbox Holder with Painted Lady, c.1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1984. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1984. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Model T Ford, c.1955–65. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Model T on Tour, 1960s. Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Nova Scotia Harbour in Autumn, n.d. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Oxen and Logging Wagon, c.1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Louise Donahoe, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1996. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Oxen in Spring [*Two Oxen with Yoke*], c.1960s. Private collection, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Painted Cookie Tin with Flowers, c.1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1984. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Painted Yellow Breadbox with Two Doors, c.1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1984. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

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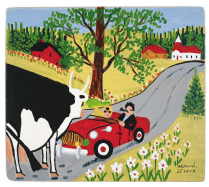

Roadster and Cow, c.1960s. Collection of Dr. Doug Lewis and Florence Lewis, Digby, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Sandy Cove, late 1940s/early 1950s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

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Smith's Cove, Digby County, c.1952. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

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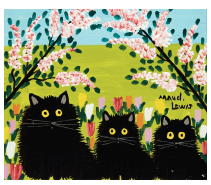
Team of Oxen in Winter, 1967. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Vic and Ann Matties, Surrey, British Columbia, 2012. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Three Black Cats, 1955. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.



Three Black Cats, n.d. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Three Black Cats, n.d. Private collection. Courtesy of Cowley Abbott, Toronto.

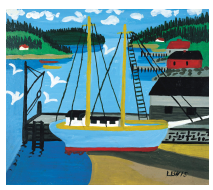
Train Coming into Station, c.1949/1950. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Untitled, n.d. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Untitled (boy with grey cat), 1969. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Untitled (Digby Ferry Passing Point Prim Lighthouse), 1950s. Private collection, Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Untitled (Horses Ploughing), n.d. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Untitled (Ship at Dock), 1960s. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Vase with Flowers, 1965. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Village Scene with Sleigh Ride [Christmas Card], c.1951. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

White Cat, 1965/1966. Private collection.

White Cat [2], 1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Johanna Hickey, Vancouver, British Columbia, 2006. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

White Flowers with Blue Birds, c.1943. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

White House and Digby Gut, 1960s. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Winter Sleigh Ride, c.1960s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Alan Deacon, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, 1994. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Wishing Well and Flowers, c.1943. Collection of CFFI Ventures Inc. as collected by John Risley. Courtesy of CFFI Ventures Inc.

Yellow Birds, c.1960s. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Credits for Photographs and Works by Other Artists

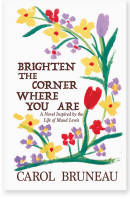
AGNS's Employee of the Month, 2018, by Laura Kenney. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Jody O'Brien.

American Winter Scene, 1940s, by unknown [after Joseph Hoover and Currier & Ives]. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of John and Norma Oyler, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2009. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, n.d., photographer unknown.

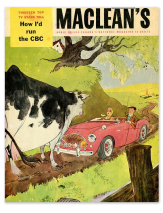
Bill Spurr with his wagon, 1942, photographer unknown. Collection of the Nova Scotia Archives, E.A. Bollinger collection. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

Cookie tin in the Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.



Cover of *Brighten the Corner Where You Are*, 2020, by Carol Bruneau.

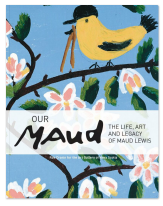
Cover of *For Folk's Sake: Art and Economy in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, 2016, by Erin Morton.



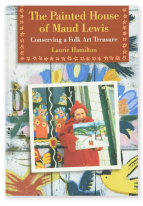
Cover of *Maclean's* magazine, April 14, 1956, by Oscar Cahén. Collection of the Cahén Archives. Courtesy of the Cahén Archives.

Cover of *Maud Lewis and the Nova Scotia Terroir*, 2019.

Cover of *Maud Lewis: Paintings for Sale*, 2019, by Sarah Milroy.



Cover of *Our Maud: The Life, Art and Legacy of Maud Lewis*, 2017, by Ray Cronin.



Cover of *The Painted House of Maud Lewis: Conserving a Folk Art Treasure*, 2001, by Laurie Hamilton.

Detail of the restored kitchen area in the Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

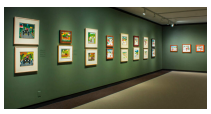
Family with horse and buggy, possibly W.H. Buckley's family at their carriage, Guysborough, Nova Scotia, c.1910. Collection of the Nova Scotia Archives, Buckley Family collection. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

Fishing schooner, "Bluenose," n.d., by W.R. MacAskill. Collection of the Nova Scotia Archives, MacAskill collection. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

Frontal view of Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Home of Maud Lewis, 1951, by John Collier Jr. Collection of the Nova Scotia Archives, Alexander H. Leighton collection. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

Installation of the exhibition *Maud Lewis: As Collected by John Risley*, June 24 to September 17, 2017, at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.



Installation view of *Maud Lewis* exhibition at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, 2019. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Installation view of *Maud Lewis* exhibition at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, 2019. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Photo credit: Alexandra Cousins.

Installation view of Maud Lewis's *Horses Hauling* on display in the Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Installation view of Maud Lewis's Painted House in the Scotiabank Maud Lewis Gallery at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, 2007. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

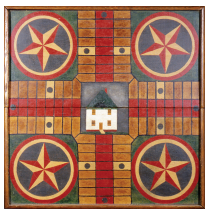
Interior of Maud Lewis's Painted House after restoration, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

The interior of the Painted House before restoration, 1984, photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Letter from Maud Lewis to John Kinnear, 1967.

Letter from Maud Lewis to Mrs. Chaplin, July 1957. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Map of Nova Scotia. © Eric Leinberger.



Mason Family Parcheesi Gameboard, c.1925. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchased with funds from the Government of Canada, Ottawa, under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, 1992. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Maud Dowley with a cat named Fluffy, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Maud Dowley with her brother, Charles Dowley, and mother, Agnes Mary Dowley, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Yarmouth County Archives.

Maud and Everett Lewis in front of the Painted House, c.1963.

Maud Lewis in the doorway of her home, 1961, photograph by Cora Greenway. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Maud Lewis in front of her home holding one of her paintings, 1965, photograph by Bob Brooks. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. © Estate of Bob Brooks.

Maud Lewis in her home, 1965, photograph by Bob Brooks. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. © Estate of Bob Brooks.

Nova Scotia Alms House, c.1891, photographer unknown. Collection of the Admiral Digby Museum.

Oriole whirligig, n.d., by Ralph Boutilier. Private collection. Courtesy of Morphy Auctions, Denver, Pennsylvania.

Out for Christmas Trees, 1946, by Grandma Moses. Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Kallir Family in honour of Hildegard Bachert, 2017. Courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. © Grandma Moses Properties Co., New York.

The Painted House in disrepair, c.1981, photographer unknown. Collection of Yarmouth County Archives. Courtesy of Yarmouth County Archives.

Panoramic view of the interior of the Painted House after restoration, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Postage stamp featuring Maud Lewis, *Family and Sled*, c.1960s, 2020. Courtesy of Canada Post.

Postage stamp featuring Maud Lewis, *Team of Oxen in Winter*, 1967, 2020. Courtesy of Canada Post.

Postcard depicting the Evangeline Wharf in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, c.1910. Private collection.

Poster of *Maudie*, 2016. Courtesy of Mongrel Media, Toronto.

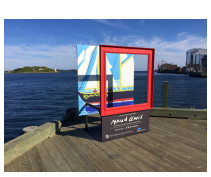
Prize yoke of oxen, Halifax, Nova Scotia, c.1950s, photographer unknown, published by The Book Room Ltd., Halifax.

Restored door of Maud Lewis's Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1984. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

The restored kitchen area of the Painted House, n.d., photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

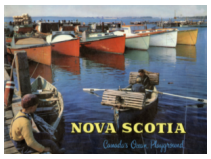
Sailboat, 1975, by Everett Lewis. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1977. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Self-Portrait, 1976, by Collins Eisenhauer. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1977. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax. © Estate of the artist.



Selfie-station with Maud Lewis's painting *The Bluenose*, 2017, photograph by T.J. Maguire. Courtesy of T.J. Maguire.

Still Life with Bowl, Fish, and Fruit, 1989, by Gerald Ferguson. Private collection. Courtesy of the CCCA Canadian Art Database. © Estate of the artist.



Tourism booklet for Nova Scotia, 1960. Collection of the Nova Scotia Archives Library. Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Archives.

Trotting Horse Weathervane, c.1920s. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, purchase, 1978. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Untitled [Animals], n.d., by Joe Sleep. Private collection. Courtesy of Atlantic Fine Art.

View of Cape Forchu Lighthouse before De-Staffing in 1993, n.d., photograph by Chris Mills.

View of the Lewis family headstone, Marshalltown, Digby County, n.d., photograph by Robert Hersey. Courtesy of Robert Hersey.

View of the Maud Lewis memorial in Marshalltown, Digby County, Nova Scotia, n.d., photograph by Robert Hersey. Courtesy of Robert Hersey.

Yarmouth Main Street, looking south, c.1887–92, photographer unknown. Collection of Yarmouth County Archives. Courtesy of Yarmouth County Archives.

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